

RICE UNIVERSITY

**The Racial, Gender, and Religious Politics of Interracial
Romance on the Early Modern Stage**

by

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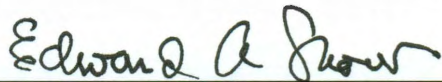
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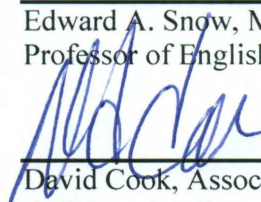
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ABSTRACT

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Despite recent scholarly interest in Anglo-Islamic relations and the Turk figure on the early modern stage, the intricate power dynamics of interracial romance has been largely neglected. My project seeks to address this lacuna in the scholarship by examining the ways in which romantic relationships between interracial couples invert gender, racial, and religious stereotypes in plays by William Shakespeare, Phillip Massinger, Lodowick Carlell, and Robert Greene. Many studies have found a xenophobic, racialized gender ideology in such plays, but as I will demonstrate, the representation of Muslims as licentious, cruel, and barbarous is not always the norm. Nor are the captive maids, brides-to-be, or wives as weak or helpless as critics have made them out to be. Instead, Christian-Muslim relations in these plays challenge what have been seen as the official gender, racial, and religious ideologies in early modern England.

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CHAPTER ONE

Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Representation of Islam in early modern England

Background and Literature Review

Despite the fact that its capital city and over one third of its territory was within the continent of Europe, the Ottoman Empire has consistently been regarded as a geopolitical and cultural entity apart and divided from the West by differences of culture and religion. Recently, however, historians such as Jerry Brotton and Daniel Goffman have begun to challenge this traditional Eurocentric view of the Renaissance as misleading. Jerry Brotton follows the pioneering work of Lisa Jardine, Walter D. Mignolo, and Deborah Howard, who have questioned the idea that the European Renaissance was a movement isolated from world history, with Greco-Roman art and the studia humanitatis as its sole inspirations. It was Europe's contact with the East and the circulation of oriental goods as well as knowledge in architecture, astronomy, and geography which made the European Renaissance what it was.¹ Literary critics of the early modern period have also recognized that British literary history has been written at the price of ignoring the Mediterranean Islamic "periphery," with a narrow focus on the Euro-Christian center when in both political and economical terms, England remained a small island on the margin of Western Europe, and the Ottoman, Persian, and Indian empires were unimpressed by the material culture of Western Europe.² Following this recognition, there has been a flourishing critical interest in exploring early modern Anglo-Ottoman relations and the representation of Islam in English literature.³

In *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (1999), Nabil Matar offers a critique of a retrospective imposition of Said's Orientalism to early modern texts, yet ends up reasserting the basic divisions between a colonizing West and a colonized East in the literary representations of the Turk figure. In *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (2003), Daniel Vitkus retraces the early modern historical context to deconstruct reductive preconceptions regarding Anglo-Ottoman cultural dynamics and teases out the complexity of foreign encounters conducted through international trade. In *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (2005), Jonathan Burton reacts against Matar's reductive assertion that "simplification and stereotyping were the rules by which Britons represented Muslims" (116).⁴ Burton joins a wave of recent scholars in maintaining that Said's model of hegemonic Orientalism does not account for a pre-imperial discourse. He argues instead that the images of Muslims and Islam produced during the early modern period ranged from "the censorious to the laudatory, from others to brothers" (12).

In *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (2005), Matthew Dimmock also rejects Matar's assertion that "not a single play about the Muslim Levant and North Africa in the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline periods showed the Muslim in a morally heroic and favorable light" (14) and offer novel readings of a number of texts discounted by Matar as part of an ongoing "'frenzy of racism and bigotry'" (12). He shows that early modern England was widely infused with images, translations, chronicles, plays, polemics, and theological treatises about Islam and the Turks. Dimmock approaches the texts through the lens of the political and military transformations of the sixteenth century, looks at theological and polemical sources, and

surveys Anglo-Ottoman commercial relations. He concludes that representations of Turk figures in the early modern period were ambivalent, neither completely demonized, nor depicted in light of their distinct history, identity, and religious culture.

In *Britain and Barbary: 1589-1689* (2005), Matar focuses on the representation of the Moor in Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* (1589) and Dryden's *Don Sebastian* (1689). He identifies a turning point in Britain's military position in the Mediterranean which began in the Interregnum when the navy was doubled and the British were no longer at the mercy of their maritime rivals. Matar then argues that a paradigm shift in national self-fashioning and literary representation accompanies the maritime empowerment between 1649 and 1651; "when Britons feared the Moors, they invented them in Othello-like heroic and dangerous terms; when they no longer feared them, they turned them into dull natives or noble savages" (8). He is right to emphasize the importance of conducting a chronological study as changes in Anglo-Ottoman political and military power dynamics are often accompanied by shifts in literary and cultural representations. However, the Anglo-Ottoman socio-political and cultural engagement in the early modern period was far more complex than Matar acknowledges in his literary analysis in this book. In *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories About the Ottoman Turks* (2006), Linda McJannet investigates English plays about Turkish history, their sources, and each dramatist's specific interventions.

The burgeoning list of publication in this field testifies to the continuing critical interest in re-Orienting the field of early modern cultural and literary studies. Although in the period between 1579 and 1624, there were over sixty dramatic works featuring Islamic themes, characters, or settings produced in England alone, most of the previous

studies limit their discussions of stage “Turks” to those in canonical authors, such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Kyd. I would like to fill up this critical gap by investigating racial and gender dynamics in non-canonical Turk plays that often get overlooked because of their obscure status. Despite recent scholarly interest in Anglo-Islamic relations and the figure of the Turk on the early modern stage, the intricate power dynamics of interracial romance has been largely neglected. My project seeks to address this lacuna in the scholarship by examining the ways in which romantic relationships between interracial couples invert gender, racial, and religious stereotypes in plays by William Shakespeare, Phillip Massinger, Lodowick Carlell, and Robert Greene. Many studies have found a xenophobic, racialized gender ideology in such plays, but as I will demonstrate, the representation of Muslims as licentious, cruel, and barbarous is not always the norm. Nor are the captive maids, brides-to-be, or wives as weak or helpless as critics have made them out to be. Instead, Christian-Muslim interracial relations in these plays challenge what have been seen as the official gender, racial, and religious ideologies in early modern England.

This study also builds upon Bernadette Andrea’s critical work in its attempt to rectify the “continuing effacement of women’s agency in literary and cultural studies of early modern England and the Islamic world” by positioning gender as “a crucial category of analysis” for Anglo-Islamic encounters on the early modern English stage.⁵ This analytical orientation is not only fitting but essential to this project since the categories of gender, race, and religion “are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather they come into existence in and through relation to each

other—if in contradictory and conflictual ways.”⁶ This project ultimately participates in a broader critical debate about the subversive nature of the early modern theater.

LIMITATIONS OF SAID’S ORIENTALISM

In the past few decades, the work of Edward Said has been a major influence on the study of early modern colonialism and east-west cross-cultural encounters. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* sums up the idea that a lopsided view of Islam arose out of the western colonization of the “Orient,” which developed in the period of European imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The concept of the “Orient” that was invented by Europeans was based on fanciful perceptions rather than on accurate facts. The insistence on creating and upholding negative stereotypes worked to justify religious wars, colonial expansion, and the exploitation of peoples and resources. Islamic culture tended to be encapsulated through a number of defining stock traits and characteristics. Thus Islam as a religion, and the people who embraced it, were indiscriminately lumped together as a homogeneous group of stock stereotypes. Much of the stereotyping emerging from this imperialist encounter dealt less with Islam as a religion and culture than with a caricature portrayal of the Orient as the mysterious and exotic at best and the tyrannical and blood-thirsty at worst. Said’s critique upholds the view that by portraying Europe as an area of superior culture and the “Orient,” as an area of inferior culture, Europeans divided the world into the civilized “self” and uncivilized “Other”. Reproductions of this Eurocentric, imperialist knowledge not only colored and conditioned Western perceptions of Islam, but also influenced the way Muslim societies were and continue to be interpreted.

Said's analytical model has been both valuable and influential to the study of east-west colonial and post-colonial encounters. However, to take the theoretical model of Said's *Orientalism* and apply it anachronistically to early modern Anglo-Ottoman relations, risks the dangers of overlooking the specificity of its socio-political conditions and fails to address the growing complexities of early modern international economies and geopolitics. As Nabil Matar observes, in the period under study, "the allure of Islam was powerful, and the borders between Christian Europe and Muslim North Africa were porous."⁷ Failure to historicize complex Anglo-Ottoman relations may lead to serious distortions and awry misconceptions of the early modern English imaging of Islam. Having said that, I do not imply that there is a single monolithic perception or image of Islam in the early modern period. Shifting discourses and alternate images were produced to accommodate ever-shifting socio-political and commercial needs.

In this project, I would like to rectify the retrospective imposition of *Orientalism* that many scholars tend to posit onto early modern Anglo-Islamic relations. A careful review of Anglo-Ottoman relations in the early modern period reveals a socio-political context totally different from that described in Said's *Orientalism*.⁸ According to Said, the essence of *Orientalism* lies in "the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority."⁹ Far from being inferior, the Ottoman Empire constituted a powerful political, military, and religious threat to early modern European Christendom.¹⁰ Through an analysis of the circulation of art and luxury objects, Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton raise further questions about the formation of cultural identity in Western Europe and challenge the view that Renaissance culture defined itself against an exotic, dangerous, always marginal East.¹¹ They suggest that the Ottoman Empire was

not the antithetical “other” to the emergence of a Western European identity in the sixteenth century. Instead, the cosmopolitan centers of Europe, Paris, Venice, and London were all linked with Istanbul and the East through networks of shared political and commercial interests.

Muslims were seen to be “different and strange, infidels and ‘barbarians,’ admirable or fearsome,” but they did not constitute “colonial targets.”¹² In fact, Matar argues, “it is precisely because Muslims possessed an empire that rivaled, indeed superseded that of England in this period that Britons began to demonize, polarize, and alterize them.”¹³ It is true that early modern England was xenophobic and insular to some extent, frequently defining itself in literary and cultural texts against the demonic or vaguely exotic other. But, the traditional, hegemonic model of post-colonial theory “by which the stereotyping of the subjected people structures ideological unity for the dominant people” by no means describe Anglo-Ottoman political relations in early modern England.¹⁴

SHIFTING DISCOURSES AND FLUID IDENTITIES

To take part in the flourishing international commerce in the Mediterranean world and seek strategic alliances with the Ottomans against the Continental threat of Spain, a new rhetoric was required to accommodate new political and commercial needs in the Elizabethan period.¹⁵ Relatively late participants in the Mediterranean international trade business, English merchants “competed with their French and Dutch counterparts for a share of the lucrative Levant traffic” in Aleppo and Izmir as well as at Istanbul.¹⁶ In 1579, Queen Elizabeth I opened official diplomatic relations with Sultan Murad III. In both their correspondences, Elizabeth I and Murad III strategically chose to stress the

similarities of their religious cause, thus aligning themselves as those “who do not worship idols” and “revenger[s] of idolatrie” in opposition against the Roman Catholics.¹⁷ In a letter to Sultan Murad III, Queen Elizabeth encouraged amicable Anglo-Islamic trade relations with the hope that “by mutuall trafique, the East may be joined and knit to the West.”¹⁸ While Turks were figured as cruel, blood-thirsty “infidels” in some travelogues, sermons, and popular discourses, the official diplomatic correspondences reconfigured them as allies against Continental papists. This testifies to the fluidity and flexibility of early modern discourses in representing and imaging Islam. When it was political expedient, the early modern English were quick to strategically erase the Anglo-Islamic dichotomies of Christians and “infidel dogs,” and unite with Ottomans in their shared condemnation of idolaters.

MOVING BEYOND STEREOTYPES?

While England opened up diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire, English popular discourses and dramatic representations still created inaccurate and distorted images that revealed animosity toward Islam. Racial othering of Islamic culture, religion, and people, was not new to the early modern English period, but a “long and deeply rooted tradition in the West.”¹⁹ Devaluation, denigration, and even demonization of Islam, which can be traced back to the early medieval period, was further solidified during the Crusades in the eleventh century and persisted in the era of Spanish *reconquista* and Ottoman imperialism.²⁰ Furthermore, “the historical reality of the Ottoman threat and real anxieties about the Turks were rarely represented or expressed without the accompaniment of anti-Islamic polemic.”²¹ Despite more extensive contact between Englishmen and Muslims, xenophobic representations and

negative stereotypes of Muslims abound in cultural and literary texts in early modern England.

In a long-standing tradition of anti-Islamic polemics, medieval and early modern European texts almost always defined the religion of Mahomet as a religion of sensuality and sexuality. Norman Daniel argues that early modern European Christians saw Islam as a religion “essentially built upon a foundation of sexual license which was plainly contrary to the natural and the divine law.”²² In a sermon against English renegades who converted to Islam, Edward Kellett (1627) denigrates the Prophet Mahomet as a lascivious degenerate plagued with venereal disease:

The great seducer Mahomet, was a salacious, lustful Amoroso; and his intemperate lasciviousness, was wayted on by infirmities and sicknesses correspondent to his lewdnesse and in him, a testimonie of a very sinfull soule, in a very sinfull body.”²³

In *The Manners, lawes, and customes of all Nations* (1611), Edward Aston claims that the great allurements of Islam is that Mahomet allows Muslim people “free liberty and power to pursue their lustes and all other pleasures, for by these meanes, this pestilent religion hath crept into innumerable Nations.”²⁴ In Henry Byam’s sermon, the Prophet is described not only as lustful but as wicked, adulterous, and murderous:

He was the very puddle and sink of sin and wickedness. A thief, a murderer, an adulterer, and a Wittal. And from such a dissolute life proceeded those licentious laws of his That they may take as many wives as they be able to keep, and lest insatiable lust might want whereon to feed, to surfeit, he alloweth divorce upon

every light occasion. He himself had but eleven wives, besides whores; but the Grand Signior in our days kept three thousand concubines for his lust.²⁵

In *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, the description of paradise in the Koran is made to resemble an orgy of polygamy with women serving the sole purpose of fulfilling male sexual fantasies:

Where a man shall find all kinds of fruit at all seasons of the year, and rivers running with wine, and milk, and honey, and clear water, (where) they will have beautiful palaces and fine great mansions, according to their deserts, and that those palaces and mansions are made of precious stones, gold, and silver. Every man shall have four score wives, who will be beautiful damsels, and he shall lie with them whenever he wishes, and he will always find them virgins.²⁶

In Christian accounts of the Islamic paradise, even the spiritual rewards that Muslims receive in afterlife are depicted as exotic pictures of moral depravity and sexual abandon.

Europeans also seemed to be fascinated with the paradoxical nature of the Sultan's harem. While the seraglio stood as the living proof of Muslim hyper sensuality and sexual license, the claustrophobic nature of the harem also embodied the strict physical boundaries and potential violence of Islamic despotism: "for there may none come near, nor be in sight of [the sultan and his women], but himself and his black eunuchs: nay if any other should but attempt, by some trick in creeping into some private corner, to see the women, and should be discovered, he should be put to death immediately."²⁷ In his description of the Sultan's seraglio, Ottaviano Bon not only offers a voyeuristic tour of

the harem, but he also provides an exotic account that describes Muslim female sexuality as potentially monstrous and beastly according to early modern sexual standards:

They doe not only search the women which enter, and the Eunuches at thir returne from the Citie: But moreover they have a care of beasts: They will not allow the Sultanaes to keepe any Apes, nor Dogges of any stature. Fruits are sent unto them with circumspection: If their appetites demand any pompeons which are somewhat long, or cowcumbers, and such other fruits, they cut them at the Gate in slices, not suffering to passe among them any slight occasion of doing evill, so bad an opinion they have of their conticencie.²⁸

In this passage, female sexuality within the seraglio is depicted as insatiable as the eunuchs try every available method to circumvent any potential object that could feed into the rampant sexual appetite of the sultan's concubines.

In medieval and early modern Europe, Christian identities were constructed mainly in opposition to Islam. Thus, it is not surprising that in theological writing, such as biblical exegesis, polemics, and eschatological treatises, Turks were often associated with the beastly and the monstrous. John Foxe compared Mohammad to the beast in *Revelation* and Thomas Brightman referred to the Turks as “a brood of vipers.”²⁹ Henry More refers to Muslims as “these Scorpion Locusts” and demonizes their religion as poison: “it being the nature of the Scorpion perpetually attempt to sting and transfuse her poison, as of these Saracens to proselyte the world to their Religion.”³⁰ Thomas More describes “Paynym/lew/ Turk [and] Saracene” as “fallen from all crysten charyte but also

from all humanite and felyng of eny good affeccyon naturall” and thus consumed with a “brutysh and bestyall” appetite.³¹

In addition to associating Turks with bestiality and monstrosity, European Christians also frequently labeled Muslims as cruel and bloodthirsty, and represented the Ottoman Empire as ‘this cruell blodesheder enemye of our holy crysten faythe.’³² Because Europe was constantly under the threat of Muslim military invasion since the time of the Crusades, Muslims were feared as formidable opponents and stereotyped as cruel bloodthirsty warmongers. In *Acts and Monuments*, John Foxe describes Solemannus the Turkish Emperor as not only merciless and cruel but bloodthirsty: [Solemannus] bereft [some] of there sight, some he rent & mangled in peces, cutting of there noses, eares, handes, armes and priuy members, defloring virgins, cutting of womens paps, opening the wombes of those which were with Child, and burnyinge the yong babes . . .³³ Not satisfied with the plain act of killing Christians, the Turkish Emperor is depicted as a sadist dismembering the body parts of Christians for the sake of satiating his excessive appetite for blood. Similarly, In *Voyage into the Levant* (1636), Sir Henry Blount offers vivid descriptions of “horrid executions” performed by Turks on Christians: “Empaling, Gaunching, Flaying alive, cutting off by the Waste with a red hot iron, [An]Ointing with honey in the Sunne, hanging by the Foot, planting in burning Lime, and the like.”³⁴

In an anonymous account of the siege of Vienna in 1529, Turks are depicted as the “great plague and ruine of [the] whole Christendome.”³⁵ The detailed images of Turkish persecution places special emphasis on the gruesome bodily tortures and the painful psychological torment as well as the merciless sadism of the Ottoman torturers:

Where ever they ouercome the Christians and take them captiues, they take the yong and lusty men tying them to their horses & famish them to death. The old men and women they cut in peeces, deflouring the maydens and young women very villainously. The sely Infants and yong Babes lying in their cradles smyling vpon them, they take out very cruelly and sticke them on long poles and so gore them to death without pitie or mercy, and this very spitefully they do in the sight of the Infantes Parentes. The residue of them whiche they keepe alyue being men, they vse as beastes. To the women and children whych they keepe alyue, they vse such Sodomish abomination and tyranny as may not for shame be knowen, nor without hartly sorrow be declared.³⁶

Englishmen who suffered captivity under Turkish rule also detailed their plight in painstaking details after their return to England. In *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant* (1640), Francis Knight likens the tortures he underwent under Turkish enslavement to the Catholic persecution described in Protestant martyrologies.³⁷ This pamphlet also contains a woodcut of a Christian being tortured by a Turk and describes the sadistic tortures that the author witnessed against Christians in Algiers in great detail: “Some were crucified, others having their bones broken, were drawled along the streets at horse tailes, others had their shoulders stab’d with knives, and burning Torches set in them dropping downe into their wounds; the Turkes biting of their flesh alive, so dyed, and foure of them being walled in were starved to death.”³⁸

STEREOTYPES IN DRAMA

Turks are not only depicted as beastly and monstrous in cultural texts but also in literary texts. In the cavern scene in *Macbeth* where the three weird sisters conjure up various supernatural apparitions, the Three Witches begin their ritual by adding many foul things to a bubbling cauldron: “Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf/ Witch’s mummy, maw and gulf/ Of the ravin’d salt-sea shark, /Root of hemlock digg’d i’t’h’ dark/ Liver of a blaspheming Jew/Gall of goat, and slips of yew/ Silver’d in the moon’s eclipse,/ Nose of Turk and Tartar’s lips,” (4.1.23-30).³⁹ As the “ingredients of [their] cauldron” (4.1.35), the “Nose of [a] Turk and [a] Tartar’s lips” are juxtaposed and conceptually equated with body parts of wild beasts and supernatural creatures, such as the “Eye of Newt, and Toe of Frogge, / Wool of Bat, and Tongue of Dogge, / Adder’s Fork, and Blind-worm’s Sting, / Lizard’s leg, and Howlet’s wing,” (4.1.15-18). Another example can be found in the storm scene in *King Lear*. Edgar, disguised as a mad man, delivers a speech that lumps together all sorts of negative traits in a Turk: “wine loved I deeply, dice dearly: and in woman /out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of / ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, / wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey” (3.4.90).⁴⁰ A wide array of negative stock images are piled up in reference to the Turk figure in conjunction with animalistic imagery: lustful, disloyal, gullible, murderous, slothful, avaricious, irrational, and fierce.

In addition to negative references to Turks in passing, sustained hostile representations of Muslims in the early modern English theater also abound. Islamic women are often demonized and sexualized while Muslim men are portrayed as violent, lustful, or villainous. In stories of Christians turning Turk that circulated in early modern times, “Muslim women are temptress who ensnare Christian men into a licentious

faith.”⁴¹ This plot pattern is repeatedly evoked in plays such as Phillip Massinger’s *The Renegado*, Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turke* (1612) or Fletcher’s *The Island Princess* (1619-21) in which Muslim women initiate sexual contact and ask the Christian hero to convert to Islam.⁴²

In Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turke* (1612), the beautiful but “morally depraved” Voadia is “the embodiment of the early modern stereotype of the cultural ‘other.’”⁴³ Not only is she the “negative model of Islamic femininity” but also the “economically and sexually rapacious evil temptress.”⁴⁴ The Muslim servant woman, Zanthia, in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Knight of Malta* (1616), also embodies some of the worst Muslim stereotypes. Mountferrat calls her “hells perfect character” (5.1.63) because of her “black shape, and blacker actions” (5.1.64). In comparison with Mountferrat, the sinful white Christian male, Zanthia is the more condemned as she is identified as “the demonic agent” of the play propelling all evil actions.⁴⁵ Because Zanthia is not only “a debased whore” but also a “temptress,” she is held “more responsible for the failing of Mountferrat than he is.”⁴⁶ While the European white woman, Oriana, stands for purity and chastity, Zanthia is the anti-thesis of chastity and morality and stands for “venery and anti-Christian evil.”⁴⁷

While Muslim women are often portrayed as the Siren figures that lure Christian men into their destruction, Muslim men are often portrayed as violent or lustful villains that violate Christian morality. The villainous Moor, Eleazar, in Thomas Dekker’s *Lust’s Dominion*, and Aaron, in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* (1593-94), are the unrepentant vicious and violent Machiavellian types while Mullisheg, the King of Fez, in Thomas Heywood’s *Fair Maid of the West*, Parts I and II (1610, 1630-31) and Asambeg, the

Viceroy of Tunis, in Phillip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1623) are the representatives of amorous Muslim stereotypes who lust after European women. Shakespeare's Othello starts out as an exceptional and virtuous Venetian general only to turn into the stereotypical jealous, irrational, and murderous Turk in the end.

A NOTE ON RACE

While I recognize that applying the term "race" to early modern English texts and contexts is anachronistic, I am using the term "race" as a broad analytical category that pertains to the differentiation and classification of human beings in terms of physiological features, religious affiliations, geographical origins, and cultural practices.⁴⁸ Even though there is still no scientific consensus as to the genetic validity of race as a human classificatory system, the lack of scientific evidence has not prevented race from being used as "a mechanism of social stratification."⁴⁹ Although the widespread linguistic use of the term race with its modern ideological content is a recent development in human history, "racial stereotyping" is not the product of modern colonialism alone, but "goes back to the Greek and Roman periods" and "provide some abiding templates for subsequent European images of 'barbarians' and outsiders."⁵⁰

Jerome Friedman traces the origin of the modern concept of race to Spanish blood laws in the early modern period.⁵¹ Ania Loomba also locates the Elizabethan period as "the first moment of the emergence of modern notions of "race."⁵² Even though "race" was an unstable and highly contested concept charged with various controversies and incoherencies, many cultural and literary critics of the early modern period still see the concept of race as a useful category of analysis.⁵³ Whereas modern "scientific" notions of race focuses almost exclusively on physiological features, early modern ideas of race

were deeply intertwined with theological paradigms, social structures, and sexual practices.⁵⁴ From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the term “race” was synonymous with various words that refer to social collective identities, such as ‘kinsfolk’, ‘lineage’, ‘home’ and ‘family’.⁵⁵ “‘Race’ thus became a marker of an ‘imagined community,’ with the function of binding a group of fellow human beings together and demarcating them from others.⁵⁶ As a marker of an “imagined community,” racial differences often intermingled and overlapped with religious schisms. In medieval and early modern Europe, Christian identities “were constructed in opposition to Islam, Judaism or heathenism,” but above all, it was Islam that functioned as the predominant binary opposite of Christianity.⁵⁷ Religious difference “became an index of and metaphor for racial, cultural, and ethnic differences” and whether one was Sunni or Shiite, Protestant or Catholic, membership in a religious community was “a critical determinant of one’s identity.”⁵⁸ Therefore, individuals whose lineage remained European but who changed their religious affiliation—either under circumstances prompted by self-interest or self-preservation— were said to have turned “Turk.”

INTERRELATION OF GENDER, RACE, AND RELIGION

Ania Loomba argues that among all types of Muslim-Christian cross-cultural exchanges, interracial romance and miscegenation was “the kind of crossover that generated the greatest anxiety” in early modern England.⁵⁹ The anxiety about interracial sexual relations is intimately tied to the threat of “turning Turk”, which is “arguably the most disturbing aspect of Anglo-Islamic relations.”⁶⁰ One reason sexual intercourse between members of different groups generated much anxiety is because of the analogy between sexual fornication and religious idolatry that originates in biblical language.⁶¹

Religious conversion was frequently described in erotic terms: “converts to Catholicism were accused of sleeping with the papal ‘whore of Babylon’ and spiritually fornicating with the Devil’s minions.”⁶² In early modern Protestant polemics, conversion to Islam or to Roman Catholicism was considered “a kind of sexual transgression or spiritual whoredom.”⁶³

The conflation of sexuality and religion also figures prominently on the early modern stage. Jane Degenhardt argues that in a number of plays that overtly thematize Christian resistance to “turning Turk,” including Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turke* (1612), Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’s *The Knight of Malta* (1616), and Massinger’s *The Renegado* (1623), Christian conversion to Islam is figured “as the direct result of sexual intercourse between a Christian man and a Muslim woman.”⁶⁴ In the early modern English imagination, castration is conflated with the practice of circumcision, which is in turn related to conversion. Jonathan Burton argues that in plays such as Thomas Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West, Parts I and II* (1610, 1630-31) and Phillip Massinger’s *The Renegado*, the clownish servants, Clem and Gazet, are each linked to an upper-class hero who is briefly threatened with conversion from sexual contact. The threat of turning Turk for these Christian heroes is thus comically displaced onto the “plebeian harlequins” who risk castration in the hope to rise in status in a Muslim court.⁶⁵ The theater’s comical collapsing of the distinction between circumcision and castration in relation to Islamic conversion seems to reflect another conflation between religious circumcision and the Islamic practice of keeping eunuchs as royal servants in Turkish palaces. This double conflation offered a way of emasculating Muslims as well as the Christian renegades who converted to Islam. Thus, castration—an

extreme form of bodily emasculation—and sexual intercourse with Muslims are both inextricably linked to the fundamental threat of Islam on the English stage. The stage’s “overdetermination of sexual contact as the conduit for Islamic conversion” and the obsession with the bodily ritual of circumcision and castration suggest “a convergence of cultural and bodily or religious and racial differences that distinguished “turning Turk” from other threats of religious conversion.”⁶⁶ While the ostensible defining line between “Christian” and “Turk” was religion, the conflation of sexuality and religious conversion on the stage also demonstrates how “the categories of religion and race were complexly intertwined under the threat of “turning Turk.”⁶⁷

Vitkus identifies two basic narratives from the romance tradition that underlie the dramatic plots of Turk plays that involve interracial couples: in the first narrative, the Christian woman is enslaved by a lustful Muslim; in the second, the Christian hero rescues (and converts) the virtuous Muslim woman or “is ensnared and destroyed by the lustful Muslim temptress.”⁶⁸ While the basic dramatic plots involving interracial couples in William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1596), Phillip Massinger’s *The Renegado* (1623), Lodowick Carlell’s *Osmond the Great Turk* (1622), and Robert Greene’s *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587) adhere to Vitkus’ general observation, the specific power dynamics between the sexes in courtship, marriage, and parenthood are far from conventional. Through close textual analysis of the discursive interactions between interracial couples, I have discovered that Christian-Muslim relationships depicted in these plays are far from xenophobic. In fact, the gender, racial, and religious politics of interracial romance in these plays invert the conventional cultural ideologies of the time.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER CONTENTS

Chapter two explores the power dynamics of interracial couples in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1596) and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587). The relationship between races and sexes in courtship, marriage, and parenthood in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* challenges early modern xenophobic and misogynistic traditions. Contrary to the conventional romance plot identified by Vitkus where Muslim women seduce Christian men, in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, it is the European man who initiates the courtship of an Islamic woman and overcomes all obstacles to marry her. The characterization of Iphigena, the Muslim princess, is a complete departure of the dangerous seductress type. Unlike the early modern dramatic convention where Muslim-Christian interracial romance ends with the Islamic woman converting to Christianity and living happily ever after, conversion is not a prerequisite for Iphigena to marry Alphonsus; in fact, it is not mentioned at all. The marital relationship between the Turkish emperor, Amurack, and his Amazonian queen, Fausta, also subverts the conventional gender ideology that dictates women to be silent and obedient.

Although the official gender ideology dictating that women conform to the ideals of silence and obedience can be found in endless sermons, conduct books, and marital manuals, portrayals of Oriental and Amazonian women in both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* challenge the normative racialized gender ideology in the early modern period. Close reading of both plays suggests that a racialized gender ideology—portrayals of foreign or Oriental women as seductive, cruel, and destructive—is not always the norm. In both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, Amazonian queens feature prominently as the voice of reason. Despite the inherent socio-political inequality between Theseus and Hippolyta in

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hippolyta, the captive bride-to-be, neither submits her will nor does she relinquish her voice in front of Theseus. Even though intermarriage between a military conqueror and a political captive automatically raises a red flag over the inherent power inequality between a couple, close textual analysis reveals captive wives or brides-to-be in a more powerful and subversive role than previously allowed by literary critics.

Chapter three explores the triangular Muslim-Christian relationship between Despina, Osmond, and Melcoshus in *Osmond, the Great Turk* (1622). In *Osmond, the Great Turk*, Despina, the Christian captive in a Muslim court, takes up the role of the Oriental seductress only to be chastised and refuted by a moral upstanding Turk. Not only does Despina turn apostate and assumes great power in a Muslim court but she embodies the dangerous seductress type only to be cleansed away as a corrupting force that endangers the Turkish body politic, reversing the conventional racial, gender, and religious stereotypes. On the early modern English stage, Turks, and Turk men in particular, are the prototype of licentious suitors while Christian women often play the role of the sanctimonious captives, who remain chaste in spite of persecutions. In early modern Turk plays, interracial romantic proposals are considered “temptations” when the offering party is Muslim. More often than not, it is Christian men that face “temptations” to turn Turk under the seduction of Islamic women. In *Osmond the great Turk*, however, the opposite is true. Osmond, the Turk male, is the one facing temptations from Despina, the Christian captive. While the Tartar emperor, Melcoshus, is described as having Christian virtues, the Christian captive, Despina, is shown to embrace Muslim practices. Instead of being the paragon of Christian virtue rejecting all Islamic influences, Despina sheds her

initial status of a lowly war prisoner and chooses to embrace power and status in a Muslim court. In the end, Despina dies neither as a victim of Turkish treachery, nor as an immaculate Christian martyr. Despite all the compliments to Despina's beauty, *Despina* is seen as the Syren figure that drives men into destruction and the primary source of political instability and corruption in the Muslim court.

Chapter four investigates the religious, racial, and gender politics of interracial romance in *The Renegado* (1623) through captivity tropes. In *The Renegado*, Philip Massinger offers a dramatic rehearsal of the tensions of Anglo-Islamic identity politics, playing out anxieties about the reversible nature of gender and religious identities in the early modern period. In the parallel courtship plots between Vitelli and Donusa, and Asambeg and Paulina, Anglo-Islamic gender, racial, and religious identities are constantly renegotiated through captivity tropes. Although Donusa is often read by critics as the lustful Oriental temptress, she constantly reconfigures her own identity and subverts the normative racial, religious, and gender ideology of the time. The sexual politics between Donusa and Vitelli, and Asambeg and Paulina, are constantly expressed in religious tropes of captivity that challenges a binary reading of Anglo-Islamic relations.⁶⁹ The constant renegotiation of gender and religious identities in *The Renegado* reflects the “frighteningly unstable character” of political and religious identities in the early modern Mediterranean littoral.⁷⁰

Notes

¹ Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: 1996); Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1998), *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton UP: 2000); Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000);), Jerry Brotton and Lisa Jardine, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West* (London: 2000); Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003).

² Stallybrass, 30.

³ Daniel Vitkus has edited *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000) and *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001) and he is currently working on a monograph entitled *Islam and the English Renaissance* (Routledge). Nabil Matar is the editor and translator of *In the Land of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), and author of *Islam in Britain 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) and *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999). Meanwhile, Matar is working on a book-length project: *Europe through Islamic Eyes: The Western Mediterranean 1578-1727*. Claire Jowitt is author of *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics, 1589-1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002), and she is currently editing

Three Renaissance Pirate Plays and finishing a monograph, *Alien Nation: Piracy and Empire in Early Modern Culture 1580-1625*, both for Manchester University Press.

⁴ Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999), 116.

⁵ Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 3.

⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 5.

⁷ Matar, *Islam* 3.

⁸ England was expanding commercially and politically in the Age of Discovery, but it was by no means a colonial power in 1603, at the accession of James I, except for English expansion into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, if, indeed, such purely local and insular English expansionist activity could be considered colonialism in the modern sense. On the other hand, during the early modern era, the Christians of Spain, Portugal, England, and other nations were trying to establish their first permanent colonies in the New World while simultaneously facing the threat at home of being colonized by the Ottoman Turks (Vitkus “Orientalism” 167).

⁹ Said, 42.

¹⁰ The Ottoman Turks, after capturing Constantinople in 1453, followed up with a series of invasions and victories, including Athens in 1459, Otranto in 1480, Rhodes in 1522, Budapest in 1526, the siege of Vienna in 1529, Cyprus in 1571, and Crete in 1669 (Vitkus “Introduction” 8). The strength of Islam, however, was not only military; it was also commercial and religious. The Ottoman dominions provided ample opportunity for

Europeans of low social or financial rank to gain power and wealth. Multitudes willingly renounced their Christian faith, chose to turn Turk, and become renegade pirates, join the Ottoman army or navy as technical advisers in pursuit of such goals. Indeed, in the Letters from the great Turke sent to the holy Father the Pope in 1606, the Turkish leader “boasted that his army had 30,000 Christians who ‘are the founders of our artillerie, and other Instruments of warre’ and all of whom are ‘Renegados’ fighting ‘in defence of our lawe, and with vs to conquer your country’ ”(qtd. in Matar “Renegade” 493).

¹¹ *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 2000).

¹² Matar, *Discovery* 2

¹³ Matar, 3.

¹⁴ Robert Henke, *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater* eds. Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008) 9.

¹⁵ Burton, 128.

¹⁶ Birchwood and Dimmock, 7.

¹⁷ Skilliter, 37, 71.

¹⁸ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehouse and Sons, 1904), 2:192. Formal diplomatic ties with Muslim rulers in the Ottoman empire and the autonomous regencies in North Africa were established after 1570. During the early 1580s, the Barbary Company was established to regulate official trade between England and Morocco. The Levant Company was founded in 1581. For a detailed account of these events, see S. A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582: A*

documentary study of the first Anglo-Ottoman relations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). For the history of the Levant Company's establishment and development, see Mortimer Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1908) and Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

¹⁹ Vitkus, "Introduction" 6.

²⁰ Vitkus, "Introduction" 7.

²¹ Vitkus, "Orientalism" 169.

²² Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958) 58.

²³ Edward Kellett [and Henry Bryam], *A Returne from Argier. A Sermon Preached at Minhead in the Country of Somerset the 16. of March, 1627, at the re-admission of a relapsed Christian into our Church* (London, 1628) 23.

²⁴ Edward Aston, *The Manners, lawes, and customes of all Nations* (London, 1611) 137.

²⁵ Byam, 62-63.

²⁶ Sir John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Ed. C.W.R.D. Moseley (London: Penguin, 1983) 104.

Mandeville's narrative was reprinted many times in Elizabethan England and was received as "a factual account" (Vitkus 208). It was also included in the first edition of Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (1589).

²⁷ Ottaviano Bon was the Venetian representative in Istanbul from 1604 to 1607. See Ottaviano Bon, *The Sultan's Seraglio* trans. Robert Withers as *A Description of the*

Grand Signor's Seraglio, or Turkish Emperours Court (London, 1625) ed. Godfrey Goodwin (London: Saqi Books, 1996) 65.

²⁸ Withers 65.

²⁹ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. IV, p. 22. Brightman, *A Revelation of the Revelation that is The Revelation of Saint John opened clearly with a logicall Resolution and Exposition* (Amsterdam, 1615), 134.

³⁰ Henry More, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos: or the Revelation of St. John the Divine unveiled* (1680), 81.

³¹ *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of Thomas More*, vol. 7 *A Supplication of Souls* ed. Frank Manley, Germain Marc'hodour, Richard Marius and Clarence H. Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) 171. Matthew Dimmock suggests that "the link between 'saracen' and 'turke' was very common in the first half of the sixteenth century" and that the association reinforced the Christian/Infidel distinction originated during the crusades (21).

³² *The begynnyng and foundacyon of the holy hospytall & of the ordre of the knyghtes hospytallers of saynt Iohan baptyst of Ierusalem ... Here foloweth the syege/ cruell oppugnacyon/ and lamentable takynge of the cyte of Rodes* (London, 1524) sig. B. 1v.

³³ John Foxe, *The First Volume of the Ecclesiastical History, contayning the Actes & Monuments of things passed in euery kings time, in this Realme, especially in the Church of England principally to be noted.* (London, 1570), 442.

³⁴ Blount, Sir Henry. *A Voyage into the Levant: A Briefe Relation of a Journey, Lately Performed by Master H. B., Gentleman, from England by the way of Venice, into*

Dalmatia, Sclavonia, Bosnia, Hungary, Macedonia, Thessaly, Thrace, Rhodes and Egypt unto Gran Cairo: With Particular Observations Concerning the modern condition of the Turkes and other people under that Empire (London, 1636) 52.

³⁵ Anonymous. *Newes from Vienna the .5. Day of August .1566. of the strong Towne and Castell of Iula in Hungary, xl. Myles beyond the riuer Danubius, which was cruelly assaulted by the great Turke, but nowe by Gods mighty working relieued ...* (London, 1566) sig. A. 3v.

³⁶ Anonymous. *Newes from Vienna the .5. Day of August .1566. of the strong Towne and Castell of Iula in Hungary, xl. Myles beyond the riuer Danubius, which was cruelly assaulted by the great Turke, but nowe by Gods mighty working relieued ...* (London, 1566) sig. a. 3r.-A. 4v.

³⁷ Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's the Virgin Martir and the Early Modern Threat of "Turning Turk"" *ELH* 73.1 (Spring 2006): 83-117, 57. In pamphlets that debated the political and religious disputes of the day, such as Simon Fish's *A Supplication for the Beggars* (1529), Thomas More's *A Supplication of Souls* (1529), and *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), Ottoman threat was translated "into political and satirical metaphors" related to ideas concerning religious reform in England. English notions of the "Turk" and ideas about religious reform would remain intertwined for most of the sixteenth century (*New Turkes* Introduction).

³⁸ See Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant* (London, 1640) 6. Similar accounts of torture inflicted by Turks include those of John Rawlins in *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol* (London, 1622; repr. In Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and*

Redemption, esp. 102–3); and Sir Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant* (London, 1636), esp. 52.

³⁹ Shakespeare, *Macbeth* in *The Norton Shakespeare* ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: Norton, 1997).

⁴⁰ Shakespeare, *King Lear* in *The Norton Shakespeare* ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: Norton, 1997).

⁴¹ Loomba, 214.

⁴² Loomba, 214.

⁴³ Burton *Traffic* 134; Denise A. Walen, *Constructions of Female Homoeroticism in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 98.

⁴⁴ Vitkus *Three* 14; Walen, 98. While the Turkish men try to convert Ward with the promise of wealth and power, he remains firm, but when Voada seduces Ward, “Turn Turk [and] I am yours” (7.127), he succumbs to her sexual allure immediately.

With Voada, the play explicitly replaces Muslim men with Muslim women as the cause of Christian apostasy.

⁴⁵ Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 131.

⁴⁶ Barthelemy, 131, 133.

⁴⁷ Barthelemy, 133.

⁴⁸ Modern biological anthropologists have debated about the definition of race as a categorical concept and whether to treat races “as biological realities or simply as cultural constructs for dealing with human variation” for over half a century (Leiberman 70). For

a detailed discussion of the debate, see Leonard Lieberman, Blaine W. Stevenson, Larry T. Reynolds, "Race and Anthropology: A Core Concept without Consensus" in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 20.2 (June 1989): 67-73. Some think that the concept of race is outmoded while others have detected "a recent resurgence of the race concept in skeletal biology, forensic anthropology, paleoanthropology, nutritional studies, and human genetics" (654). The "cultural concept of race" refers to "the historical construction of racial taxonomies as folk and scientific ideas during the era of European colonial expansion" (Fried 1965). Audrey Smedley argues that race is a "cultural invention" and that it "bears no intrinsic relationship to actual human physical variations, but reflects social meanings imposed upon these variations" (Smedley 690). See Matt Cartmill, "The Status of the Race Concept in Physical Anthropology," in *American Anthropologist* 100.3 (September 1998): 651-660. Anthropologists Matt Cartmill and Kaye Brown have deplored the concept of race as "biologically unrealistic, largely valueless in practice, and historically productive of suffering and injustice" (114). Matt Cartmill and Kaye Brown, "Surveying the Race Concept: A Reply to Liberman, Kirk, and Littlefield" in *American Anthropologist* 105.1 (March 2003): 114-115.

⁴⁹Smedley asserts that the term race had been used to refer to humans occasionally since the sixteenth century in the English language but was rarely used to refer to populations in the slave trade. It was a mere classificatory term like kind, type, or even breed, or stock, and "it had no clear meaning until the eighteenth century" (694). Except for indigenous Americans, members of all three of the large geographic areas that came to be categorized as "races" in the nineteenth century centuries are Mongoloids, Negroids,

and Caucasoids (693). Audrey Smedley, "'Race'" and the Construction of Human Identity" in *American Anthropologist* 100.3 (Sep., 1998): 690-702, 690.

⁵⁰ Loomba *Colonialism* 105.

⁵¹ Jerome Friedman, "Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Antisemitism," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987): 3-29.

⁵² Loomba, 203.

⁵³ Example of early modern literary criticism that features the term "race" in their titles": Joyce Green MacDonald, ed., *Race, Ethnicity and Power in the Renaissance* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), Catherine M.S. Alexander and Stanley Wells, eds., *Shakespeare and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (New York: University Press of America, 2000).

⁵⁴ Appiah emphasizes the importance of theological paradigms to early modern ideas of race, and places the shift from the theological to the biological later in time Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Race," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed., Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 275. Loomba argues that "religious difference provides a vocabulary for the expression of racial difference" in the early modern period (108) and Lisa Lampert argues that medieval representations of Jews are crucial to the "development of the category of race" in European history. Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. For a discussion of the biblical paradigms on ideas of "race," ethnicity, and identity, see Benjamin Braude,

“The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997): 103-42, and Robert Bartlett, “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001):42. Ania Loomba argues that “sexuality is central to the idea of ‘race’ understood as lineage, or as bloodline, because the idea of racial purity depends upon the strict control of lineage” (63).

⁵⁵ According to the OED, “race” could refer to the following concepts in the early modern period: (a) “A group of people belonging to the same family and descended from a common ancestor; a house, family, kindred,” for example, 1676 T. SHADWELL *Libertine* II. 33, I am the last of all my Family; my Race will fail, if I should fail. (b) “A tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock. In early use freq. with modifying adjective, as *British race*, *Roman race*, etc.” for example: 1572 I. B. *Let. to R. C.* sig. B.i, The Englishe race ouerrunne and daily spoiled. (c) “A group of several tribes or peoples, regarded as forming a distinct ethnic set.” 1612 R. COVERTE *True Rep. Englishman* 39 He is a white man and of the Race of the Tartares. And 1684 tr. A. O. Exquemelin *Bucaniers Amer.* I. iii. 28 The Spaniards love better the Negro Women, in those Western parts, or the tawny Indian Females, than their own white European race. (d) The stock, family, or class to which a person, animal, or plant belongs. Freq. in *of* (*noble, regal*, etc.) *race* . for example: 1590 SPENSER *Faerie Queene* I. X. sig. K5^v, Thou faire ymp, sprong out from English race.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/157031>

⁵⁶ Loomba, 118. The phrase “imagined communities” was first coined by Benedict Anderson to refer to the imagined social and cultural affinity shared by all the people belonging to the same nation. As Anderson puts it, a nation is “imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (224). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁵⁷ Loomba, 106.

⁵⁸ Loomba 106, 107.

⁵⁹ Loomba, 213.

⁶⁰ Burton, 52.

⁶¹ Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 61. After forty days and forty nights of not drinking and eating, Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony that contained the covenant of God with Israel. In this covenant, God described himself as “a jealous God” and prohibited Israelites from committing idolatry in terms that conflate religious idolatry with sexual fornication: ¹⁴For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: ¹⁵Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; ¹⁶And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods (Exodus 34:14-16). For a similar conflation of the religious and the sexual in biblical language, see Hosea 4:10-18

where Israel is called “the harlot” and idolatry is referred to as “whoredom” (Hosea 4:15; 18).

⁶² Vitkus, *Turning Turk* 84.

⁶³ Vitkus, *Turning Turk* 78.

⁶⁴ Jane Hwang Degenhardt, “Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger’s the Virgin Martir and the Early Modern Threat of “Turning Turk”” *ELH* 73.1 (Spring 2006): 83-117, 84.

⁶⁵ Burton, 53.

⁶⁶ Degenhardt, 85.

⁶⁷ Degenhardt, 105.

⁶⁸ Vitkus, 120.

⁶⁹ Critics who address the issue of religion collapse the distinction between Protestants and Catholics, grouping them together as “Christian comrades” in opposition to the Islamic Turks, overlooking the complexities and ambiguities of identity politics in the play. Vitkus proposes that, as a rewrite of Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk*, *The Renegado* might have been subtitled “A Turk Turned Christian” (Introduction, 43). Vitkus sees *The Renegado* as a direct response to *A Christian Turned Turk*, in which the outcome of Daborne’s tragedy is reversed and the redeeming power of Christianity is affirmed. A teleological binary of Christians triumphing over Turks is implicit in this kind of reading, reducing the complexities of identity politics in the play. In “Strange Commodities,” Benedict S. Robinson reads *The Renegado* in the context of a Laudian agenda, arguing that “the play’s answer to the problem of Christianity is an inclusive one,” *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser*

to *Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 141. For similar readings, see Bindu Malieckal, “‘Wanton Irreligious Madness’: Conversion and Castration in Massinger’s *The Renegado*”, *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 31 (October 2002), 25-43, 41; Doris Adler, *Philip Massinger* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 57; Peter F. Mullany, “Massinger’s *The Renegado*”, 139; and Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 157, 159-60.

⁷⁰ Vitkus, “The English and the Early Modern Mediterranean: Theater, Commerce, and Identity,” *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 36.

CHAPTER TWO

The Racial and Gender Politics of Interracial Romance in

A Midsummer Night's Dream and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*

Introduction: Early Modern Gender Ideology and the Institution of Marriage

At almost every point marriage practices are revealing of society and its attitudes.

This is because marriage is a social act: it involves more than two people; it is hedged by law and custom: it is subject to often intense feelings of approval and disapproval; it profoundly alters the status of the parties, especially of women and any children they might bear; and it is nearly always accompanied by transfers of legal rights and frequently, of property.¹

According to cultural historians, the ideal of companionate marriage emerged and became popular in the early modern period.² The Protestant ideal of companionate marriage placed more emphasis on mutual affection and personal compatibility than on economic interests or political alliances, which were priority concerns in the model of kinship and dynastic marriages.³ Yet critics have also remarked that the practice of companionate marriage did not automatically lead to gender equality within marriage as the early modern cultural norms that dictate conjugal relations still conformed to the patriarchal ideology of obedience.⁴ The religious analogy of Christ and church, and the political metaphor of sovereign and subject were frequently applied to the marital relationship between husband and wife. Wives were enjoined to obey their husbands as

the church would obey Christ;⁵ they were also expected to submit to their husbands' authority just as a subject would submit to the sovereignty of their monarch.⁶ John Wing expresses this political analogy most forcefully in his *Crowne Conjugall or the Spouse Royall* (1620): "Every Husband, is his Wives King; though every Wife be not her Husbands crowne."⁷ While the Protestant ideology of marriage emphasized the wife's subjection to her husband, many apologists contrasted the role of the wife as "helpmate" to the abject status of servants and slaves.⁸ In *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* (1598), John Dod and Robert Cleaver proclaimed the wife "not a slave or servant" but a "companion."⁹ In his *Workes* (1627), William Gouge argued that a wife should be seen as a "yoke-fellow" rather than a "maid-servant."¹⁰ In *A Bride-Bush* (1619), William Whately noted that a wife should not be "slavish" in her "loving subjection."¹¹ In *A Golden Keye opening the Locke To Eternall Happiness* (1609), Francis Dillingham also makes a distinction between the subjection of wives and the subjection of servants. He argues that a servant is "servily subject" because he "worketh for another," but a wife is "politiquely subject" because she "worketh for [her] owne good."¹²

This official gender ideology dictating that women conform to the ideals of silence, obedience, and chastity can be found in various culturally prescriptive texts, such as sermons, conduct books, and marital manuals. Popular ballads, jest books, and emblems, however, often undercut these same ideals. John Taylor's *Wit and Mirth* (1629), *A Banquet of Jestes* (1657), and Richard Bathwaite's *Ar't Asleep Husband* (1640), feature wives "delivering punch lines at their husband's expense" (121).¹³ In a figure called "Matrimonium," marriage is portrayed as an onerous yoke, depriving a married man of his liberty.¹⁴ The illustration in "Matrimonium" features a personification of marriage as

a miserable man with his neck under a yoke and his legs in the stocks: “Matromonie standes, / In wooden stocks, repenting him too late: / The servile yoake, his neck, and shoulder weares.”¹⁵ Peacham’s verses explain that the stocks locking the legs in place show “his want of libertie” and the yoke is simply “an ensigne of servilitie,” both of which points to the domineering status of the wife and the of lack of authority of the husband in the matrimony.¹⁶ These images of marriages turned-upside-down derived from “centuries-old carnival traditions, comic farces, and oral tales,” and appeared in various types of visual forms throughout Europe.¹⁷ The popular broadsheet tradition that circulated throughout Europe in the sixteenth century usually consisted of a number of motifs depicting symbolic reversals, such as inversions of age (the child teaching old men), inversions of status (the servant riding on a horse with the king trailing behind), inversions of gender (the wife fighting with a sword while the husband sits spinning), and inversions of human and animal (horses sitting in a chariot dragged by humans).¹⁸ The inversion of gender roles was a popular topos, and often portrayed women engaged in traditional masculine activities, such as fighting in the battlefield while their husbands stayed behind to take care of domestic tasks.

In addition to these visual images of symbolic reversals, the figure of the Amazon also stood as a cultural icon for the inversion of gender roles in the early modern period. Geraldo U. de Sousa argues that the figure of the Amazon “combines notions of symbolic inversion and gender aberration,” and “marks the frontier between European and alien.”¹⁹ Barbara A. Babcock defines “symbolic inversion” as “any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic,

religious, or social and political.”²⁰ The attitude toward Amazons in early modern culture is “a mixture of fascination and horror,”²¹ which is the same general attitude Europeans held toward the Ottoman Empire.²² Hence, the exploration of Amazons “provides a worthwhile point of departure” for a study of gender and power inversion in cross-cultural encounters in Shakespeare and other non-canonical playwrights.²³

In Greek mythology, Amazons are associated with Scythia, “the extreme edge of the known world and home of the barbarians.”²⁴ Various descriptions of Amazons were available to early modern England. In William Painter’s *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575), Amazons are depicted as “most excellent warriors” who “murdred certain of their husbands” and “norished and trained [their daughters] up in armes, and other manlike exercises.” If they begot sons “they sent them to their fathers, and if by chaunce they kept any backe, they murdred them, or else brake their armes and legs in sutch wise as they had no power to beare weapons, and served for nothyng but to spin, twist, and doe other feminine labour.”²⁵ In addition to their martial ruthlessness, their matriarchal social structure, and their inversion of conventional gender norms, Amazons were also known for mutilating one side of their breasts to facilitate the use of bows and spears in war.²⁶ Their self-mutilation marks Amazons as “ambivalently powerful figures of aggressive, self-determining desire.”²⁷ Gail Kern Paster argues that Amazons were “female figures made to occupy the cultural space of the other in part because of [their] bodily oddity.”²⁸ Amazonian mastectomy signals a “complete willingness to sacrifice beauty to function” and a departure from contemporary ideals of womanhood in the “complete uninterest in an erotic appeal governed by male desire.”²⁹ While most descriptions of Amazons mark

them as cultural others, the Amazons could also epitomize “virtue and military prowess” on rare occasions.³⁰

In this chapter, I would like to investigate how interracial romance is enacted on the stage and how such performances challenge early modern conventional gender and racial ideologies. Close reading of the selected texts suggests that a racialized gender ideology—portrayals of foreign or Oriental women as seductive, licentious, cruel, barbarous, and destructive—is not always the norm. In both *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, Amazonian queens feature prominently as the voice of reason. Even though intermarriage between the conqueror and the captive automatically raises a red flag over the inherent power inequality between the couple, close textual analysis reveals captive wives or brides-to-be in a more powerful and subversive role than previously allowed by literary critics.³¹

Section I— *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Hippolyta, I woo’d thee with my sword,
 And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
 But I will wed thee in another key,
 With pomp, with triumph and with revelling. (1.1.16-19)

A Midsummer Night’s Dream opens with the prospect of a wedding between Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta, the Amazonian Queen. As Louis Adrian Montrose puts it, the beginning of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* “coincides with the end of a struggle in which Theseus has been victorious over the Amazon warrior.”³² Judging from the surface, it is tempting to assume from their betrothal that the former Amazonian

Queen has been subdued by Theseus, her past military opponent and future husband, and conclude that Hippolyta's power is contained by their imminent marriage.³³ A close reading of their conversations, however, reveal a more nuanced and balanced relationship of "musical discord" rather than the "perfect harmony" prescribed by early modern sermons, marital manuals, and conduct books.³⁴ From the opening scene, far from being submissive, Hippolyta dares to differ and expresses her unique opinions about the passage of time and the prospect of their wedding in a strong voice. The prospect of their marriage clearly elicits different emotions from the groom and the bride-to-be:

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
 Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
 Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
 This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
 Like to a step-dame or a dowager
 Long withering out a young man revenue. (1.1.1-6)

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
 Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
 And then the moon, like to a silver bow
 New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
 Of our solemnities. (1.1.7-11)

Hippolyta's and Theseus's psychological conception of time cannot be more different. Theseus complains about the slow passage of time using an emasculating simile at the expense of his authority—"O, methinks, how slow / This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires, / Like to a step-dame or a dowager / Long withering out a young man revenue" (1.1.3-6)—while Hippolyta quells his effeminate whining with a martial simile: "the moon, like to a silver bow / New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night / Of our solemnities" (1.1.9-11) fitting to her dignity as an Amazon.

Paul A. Olson argues that "the first movement [in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*], the movement toward an orderly subordination of the female and her passions to the more reasonable male, is epitomized at the beginning of the first scene with the announcement of the prospective marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta,"³⁵ but the phonetic and semantic features of these lines point to the opposite conclusion. In the simile that Hippolyta uses, she likens "the moon" to a "silver-bow" (1.1.9). Both the tenor and the vehicle of her simile are significant. The tenor, "the moon," suggests that she retains "a lingering devotion to the huntress goddess Diana and, implicitly, the chastity that the goddess represents,"³⁶ while the vehicle, "a silver-bow," is reminiscent of her Amazonian nature, showing that Hippolyta "has not entirely abandoned her martial nature."³⁷ Theseus's simile, on the other hand, puts him in a completely passive and helpless position, that of a "young man" (1.1.6) whose "revenue" (1.1.6) is tyrannized by a matriarch, the "step-dame or dowager" (1.1.5) who has outlived the patriarch of the household.³⁸ The quick, brisk rhythm of Hippolyta's speech also evokes the pace of a military troop's rigorous march, thereby reinforcing her image as a warrior, while Theseus' repetitive use of the

long vowel /oʊ/ makes him sound more like a forlorn maid rather than a victorious conqueror.³⁹

In their first exchange of words, Theseus and Hippolyta seem to have also exchanged their expected gender roles. Theseus certainly does not live up to the expectation of the “King of Order, [who] has come to rule an all-too-passionate queen,”⁴⁰ while Hippolyta is unquestionably the cool-headed one who purges Theseus of his fervid desires and emotional excess. Right after this short exchange between Theseus and Hippolyta where their gender roles are reversed, Hermia, a young Athenian lady whose filial “obedience [has turned]/ To stubborn harshness” enters the stage to defy and challenge the stability of the Athenian patriarchal order, which points to the opposite of an act moving toward the “orderly subordination of the female.”⁴¹ Theseus is commonly read by critics as “the center of the Athenian patriarchal system” with Egeus and Oberon as “ancillary corresponding patriarchs.”⁴² If Theseus is indeed the center of Athens’ patriarchal system, he is the “center [that] cannot hold.”⁴³ Much of the play’s action consists of various characters’ efforts to “challenge, reverse, and invert these patriarchies and to move into an upside-down symbolic realm.”⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, Hippolyta’s Amazonian role is “multiplied rather than foreclosed, its effects bracketing and inflecting the play.”⁴⁵

Hippolyta, I woo’d thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with revelling. (1.1.16-19)

In order to investigate the nature of the relationship between Theseus and Hippolyta in more depth, I would like to revisit the quote with which I started for a moment. In Theseus's words, "I woo'd thee with my sword, / And won thy love, doing thee injuries" (1.1.16-17), erotic desire and martial conquest are collapsed into one another. But exactly how does Hippolyta gets "woo'd" with a "sword" (1.1.16)? It is not clear from these lines, how or whether Theseus has actually "won" Hippolyta's "love" (1.1.17).⁴⁶ Hippolyta might have been "woo'd" (1.1.16) by Theseus's heroic prowess, and she might have been attracted to him because of his "victory over her, not in spite of it."⁴⁷ On the other hand, Theseus might be projecting his desires onto Hippolyta and speaking "hopefully, proleptically, or even euphemistically and apologetically" here.⁴⁸ He might have yet "won" her "love" but hopes to do so in spite of having done her "injuries" (1.1.17). In any case, Theseus promises to "wed [Hippolyta] in another key, / With pomp, with triumph and with reveling" (1.1.18-19). The insertion of "triumph" between "pomp" and "reveling" is ambiguous since the word "triumph" carries strong connotations of a victorious general's military procession.⁴⁹ According to Shakespeare's sources, Theseus marries his bride in Scythia, the homeland of Amazons, and returns to Athens from the war at the head of a triumphant military procession.⁵⁰ In his sources, the "solemnities" ("solempntee") are not his wedding, but "his military triumph."⁵¹ In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare alters the timing of Theseus' wedding and "shifts Theseus's 'solemnity' from his heroic military triumph to the joyous celebration of his wedding".⁵² By putting off the wedding until after Theseus and Hippolyta return to Athens, Shakespeare replaces the martial with the matrimonial ("merriments" and "mirth" 1.1.11-12), substituting the heroic with the festive. Although there is a remnant

trace of military heroism in Theseus's lines, in contrast to Tamora's deep resentment over her captivity under "Roman yoke" (1.1.106), "one cannot detect in [Hippolyta] a sense of bitterness or even resentment after defeat."⁵³ Despite Theseus's victory, in choosing to set the play at a time shortly after the war of the Amazons, Shakespeare also creates the sense that the challenges to Athenian patriarchy still exist.⁵⁴ By act five, the ambiguity in their relationship seems to have dispersed as Hippolyta addresses Theseus affectionately as "my Theseus" (5.1.1). In contrast to earlier scenes where Hippolyta is the one addressed as "fair Hippolyta" (1.1.1), in act five, she takes the initiative to address her betrothed in affectionate terms: 'Tis strange my Theseus, that these / lovers speak of" (5.1.1-2).

In act five, after hearing about the "dreams" that the two couples of lovers have had in the woods, Theseus and Hippolyta, once again, openly disagree about their views of "reality." Hippolyta is open-minded and perceptive while Theseus is dismissive and patronizing. Hippolyta admits that the lovers' stories are "strange" and "admirable" (5.1.27)⁵⁵ but she believes they are more than "fancy's images" because their narrative "*grows to something of great constancy*" (5.1.26).⁵⁶ Theseus, on the other hand, dismisses them as nonsensical "antique fables," "fairy toys," (5.1.3) and "fantasies" (5.1.5) that absolutely cannot be "true" (5.1.2):

THESEUS

More strange than true: I never may believe

These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend

More than cool reason ever comprehends. (5.1.2-6)

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,

And all their minds transfigured so together,

More witnesseth than fancy's images

And grows to something of great constancy;

But, howsoever, strange and admirable. (5.1.23-27)

Theseus dismisses the lovers' tales on the grounds that they sound "strange" (5.1.2) and he considers their stories as products of "seething brains" (5.1.4). According to OED, "seething" means "ebullient, tumultuous, pervaded by intense and ceaseless inner agitation, often with reference (*literally* and *figuratively*) to the condition characteristic of corruption or putrefaction."⁵⁷ In Theseus's eyes, the "fantasies" produced by their "seething brains" are completely corrupt, even bordering on hallucinations. In fact, Theseus makes several references to mental illness in this passage. First, he groups "[l]overs" together with "madmen" and claim they both "have such seething brains" and "such shaping fantasies" (5.1.5-6). Then, he invokes the famous passage about "The lunatic, the lover and the poet" as "of imagination all compact" (5.1.8-9): The "madman" (5.1.11) "sees more devils than vast hell can hold," (5.1.10) while "the lover" (5.1.11) "Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt" (5.1.12) and the "poet's pen" (5.1.16) turns "things unknown" into "shapes" and gives "airy nothing" (5.1.17) "A local habitation and a name" (5.1.18).

Some critics have seen this passage as evidence of Theseus's lack of imagination, but more importantly, it also shows his "failure of reason,"⁵⁸ which he implicitly claims to possess. Not only does he pay no attention to the evidence presented before his eyes, but his claims also have a "serious logical flaw."⁵⁹ First, he admits that "shaping fantasies" apprehends more than "cool reason" comprehends. But then he jumps to the conclusion that what we apprehend is not real without ever providing any evidence. The distinction between apprehension and comprehension is fine but important. In essence, they represent two different modes of epistemology. In early modern England, "apprehend" could mean "to become or be conscious by the senses of (any external impression); to feel emotionally, be sensible of, feel the force of; to catch the meaning or idea of; to understand"⁶⁰ whereas "comprehend" means "to grasp with the mind, conceive fully or adequately, understand."⁶¹ While the semantic content of "comprehend" is focused more exclusively on the mental dimension of understanding, the semantic field of "apprehend" includes the mental, the sensory, and the emotional dimensions. Theseus also equals "things unknown" to "no-thing," which is another logical flaw. The version of reality he espouses is a limited and limiting one in which only things that his "reason" is capable of comprehending are true. Moreover, the "cool-reason" that Theseus espouses is not only flawed but it also gets undercut throughout the play.⁶² For instance, after Lysander's eyes has been anointed with the magic juice of a plant called "love-in-idleness" (2.1.171), he instantly becomes infatuated with Helena, and he attributes this sudden change to "reason": "The will of a man is by his reason swayed, / And reason

says you are the worthier maid” (2.2.121-22). Finally, Theseus overgeneralizes from this particular denial of the lovers’ stories to a denial of all ‘antique fables’ and ‘fairy toys,’ (5.1.3) and by doing so, he “cuts off, in a fine piece of dramatic irony, both the branch on which he is sitting, and the stage on which he is standing.”⁶³ Indeed, Theseus’s whole existence and every single word he utters have come down to the audience from antiquity precisely through the medium of “antique fables” that he tries to dismiss.

Hippolyta, on the other hand, makes her judgment based on the available evidence at hand. Her argument though short proves to be more accurate. Instead of brushing the lovers off with her biased preconceptions, she actually pays attention to minute details in their stories. Unlike Theseus and Lysander who claim to have “reason” on their side when they are being irrational or illogical, Hippolyta is the one who exercises inductive reasoning—arriving at her conclusion from piecing small chunks of information together. Critics have also recognized Hippolyta’s insight as essential to our understanding of the play. René Girard argues that “the exchange between the bridegroom and his acutely perceptive bride amounts to the first critical discussion of the play.”⁶⁴ Taking what he terms “Hippolyta’s astute comment” as his point for departure, Young establishes the importance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in understanding Shakespeare’s attitude toward poetry, art, and the imagination.⁶⁵ Schwarz also argues that “the liminal voice of an Amazon” speaks for “a validation of the play.”⁶⁶ According to early modern prescriptive gender norms, Hippolyta is supposed to remain silent, even if she disagrees with her future husband. As Hippolyta would be expected to either concur with Theseus or to remain silent after his speech, it is all the more significant that she does none of the above. She openly expresses her own view and undercuts Theseus’ judgment by using the

contradictory conjunction “but.” Although, on the surface, Theseus seems to have the upper hand by virtue of his lengthy speech, in the immediate context of the play, Hippolyta is the one in tune with the imaginative dimension of the world that is quintessential to the “reality” of the play.

The fact that Hippolyta openly disagrees with Theseus in a play that is overtly concerned with the fatal consequences of marital discord is all the more telling. Contrary to Theseus’ assertion that fairies are mere “fantasies” of the imagination, Oberon and Titania’s domestic strife has catastrophic material consequences for the human world. The microcosmic quarrel between Titania and Oberon escalates into a macrocosmic catastrophe for the human world. In a heated argument with Oberon, Titania points out the cosmological costs of their domestic battle: “contagious fogs falling in the land;” “drowned field[s];” “The ox hath therefore stretch’d his yoke in vain,/ The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn/ Hath rotted ere his youth attain’d a beard;” “the spring, the summer,/The childing autumn, angry winter, change/Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,/By their increase, now knows not which is which” (2.1.88-114). Although Oberon makes Titania look like a fool by playing a trick with Bottom’s head, she is the one who reminds Oberon of the catastrophic impacts of their marital discord on the public realm and takes responsibility for being the source of human suffering: “And this same progeny of evils comes/From our debate, from our dissension; /We are their parents and original” (2.1.115-17).

Just as perfect harmony between husband and wife was often depicted in musical terms in early modern culture,⁶⁷ the relationship between Theseus and Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is also described in musical terms:⁶⁸

THESEUS

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding: for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder. (4.1.111-21)

Although Theseus and Hippolyta seem to be commenting on the acoustic effects of their hunting teams, the language they use eloquently speaks for their relationship. This is the first and only time in the play that Hippolyta and Theseus seem to agree on a matter. Instead of disagreeing with Theseus or undercutting what he says, Hippolyta takes the lead from Theseus's "musical confusion" (4.1.113), and adds to their conversation by sharing her personal history with him. Hippolyta recounts memories of the time when she "bay'd the bear" with Hercules and Cadmus in Crete and recalls the "sweet thunder" of their heroic hunt (4.1.115; 4.1.120). The acoustic effects of Hippolyta's past hunting experience—"So musical a discord, such sweet thunder"—agrees perfectly with Theseus's forecast of their upcoming hunting game. In this conversation, their past,

present, and future are bridged together by their consensus on a subject and their use of the future and past tenses “in conjunction” (4.1.113). The “musical discord” and “musical confusion” described here seem to be oxymoronic expressions that express the ideal of mutual respect in marriage even when husband and wife do not always agree with each other, capturing the essence of the relationship between Theseus and Hippolyta.

The theme of “musical discord” is further reinforced in one of the sub-plots. The play-within-the-play presented to Theseus and Hippolyta for their nuptial ceremony underscores the problem of finding concord out of discord. In order to “ease the anguish” (5.1.37) of “this long age of three hours” (5.1.33) before they consummate their marriage, Theseus asks for court entertainment. Lysander presents several options, among them is “A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus / And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth” (5.1.56-57). The oxymoronic title of *Pyramus and Thisbe* instantly catches Theseus’ interest: Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!/That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow./How shall we find the concord of this discord? (5.1.58-60). In the beginning of the play, Theseus promises Hippolyta that he will marry her on a merry note although he “woo’d [her] with [his] sword, / And won [her] love, doing [her] injuries” (1.1.16-17); the “merry and tragical! tedious and brief!” (5.1.58) play-within-the-play is another manifestation of the central question of the play: “How shall we find the concord of this discord?” (5.1.58-60). In a play that is concerned with confused lovers reshuffling to find their “true” love, authoritarian patriarchs conceding to individual choice, domestic strife ending in reconciliation, national enmity ending in a joyous wedding, and last but not least, finding meaning in a seemingly burlesque show, finding concord out of discord seems to be the fundamental tenet and the ideal of human relationships.

A Midsummer Night's Dream “figures the social relationship between the sexes in courtship, marriage, and parenthood” and “imaginatively embodies what Gayle Rubin has called a “sex/gender system.”⁶⁹ Louis Adrian Montrose argues that “the diachronic structure of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* eventually restores the inverted Amazonian system of gender and nurture to a patriarchal norm” (66).⁷⁰ Although on the surface level it seems so, a closer look at the underlying gender dynamics reveal a world of “musical discord” that is essential to the democratic negotiations constantly in process within the play. Taking into consideration how women may have taken part in “revising, negotiating, or resisting ideological paradigms rather than assuming that women were tragic victims, passive ciphers, or cultural sponges,”⁷¹ I have offered a revisionist reading of the interracial romance between Theseus and Hippolyta. Although Theseus has managed to defeat the matriarchy of the Amazons, instead of crushing them all, he brought back to Athens an Amazonian queen who has retained some of her martial traits.⁷² Throughout the course of the play, Theseus and Hippolyta represent two different world perspectives, two different human visions about the role of time, imagination, and art. In a play in which different perceptions of reality, different attitudes to love and authority are foregrounded, it is essential for the poetic vision of the play to come through that Hippolyta’s voice does not get repressed or erased. The stories of Hippolyta and Theseus, Titania and Oberon, Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius⁷³—and Thisbe and Pyramus— offer four different models of romantic relationship that are contrasted to one another throughout the play. The relationship between Theseus and Hippolyta not only provides the scaffolding frame of the play but also represents a happy medium among other extremes. The ideal romantic relationship is presented as interracial, incorporating

two seemingly disparate social systems. Contrary to injunctions of submission and obedience in marriage manuals, the relationship between Theseus and Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* offers an alternative version to the companionate marriage prescribed in the Protestant gender ideology.

Section II—*Alphonsus, King of Aragon*

There have been few critical studies on *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587) and none of them has focused on the dynamics of interracial romance and marriage between Amurack and Fausta, and Alphonsus and Iphigina.⁷⁴ Of all the plays that scholars have linked to Robert Greene, *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* is “certainly the least impressive.”⁷⁵ It is heavily indebted to Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* “in language and action,”⁷⁶ but it was probably Greene’s first professional play.⁷⁷ Though it was not published until 1599, various features of the play, such as the presence of a mythical framework and unconventional stage directions, indicate that it was probably written a decade or so earlier when Greene was still relatively inexperienced with the professional Elizabethan theater culture.⁷⁸ In spite of its various literary shortcomings, the lively interracial dynamics in the play makes it a rich cultural text to study. *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* features two interracial couples: Fausta, the Amazonian queen is married to Amurack, the Turkish emperor while Iphigina, the Turkish princess is being courted by Alphonsus, the prince of Aragon. The power dynamics of the marital relationship between Fausta and Amurack reveal a picture akin to some of the images of marriages turned-upside-down in the European broadsheet tradition where women wield more power than men. Contrary to the early modern dramatic convention where interracial romance usually ends with the Islamic woman converting to Christianity and living happily ever after with the European

protagonist, conversion is not a prerequisite for Alphonsus to marry Iphigina; in fact, it is not mentioned at all. Departing from the typical scenario where Islamic women are cast into the role of the surreptitious seductress who lures the European protagonist into spiritual destruction, in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, it is the European hero who goes after Iphigina, the Islamic heroine, and overcomes all obstacles to marry her.⁷⁹ In *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, the power dynamics of both interracial couples challenge and invert conventional gender and racial stereotypes.

If Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an outspoken and insightful Amazonian bride-to-be, Fausta, the Turkish empress and Amazonian queen in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, exudes confidence in her speech and commands power in her action. Not only does she verbally disagree with her husband, Amurack, but she also threatens to go to war to overthrow his decision to marry off their daughter, Iphigina, to their European archenemy, Alphonsus. The first time Fausta comes on stage, she challenges the wedding decree between Iphigina and Alphonsus in the dream vision of Amurack. As soon as she hears Amurack declare that "Alphonsus and Iphigina / Should be conjoin'd in Juno's sacred rites" (3.2.42-43), Fausta "rebuke[s]" Amurack for being a traitor to Belinus (3.2.50), their political ally. Instead of being flustered by Amurack's dream, Fausta accuses Amurack of pronouncing "wicked words" (3.2.45) from his "traitorous heart" (3.2.50), and she announces her determination to lead "all the army of Amazones" (3.2.67) to "fight/'Gainst Amurack" in order to "maintain the right" (3.2.69-70). She strongly opposes the interracial match, calling it "a heinous deed" (3.2.64) and goes so far as declaring war on Amurack if he "seek[s] to give [their] daughter to [Alphonsus]" (3.2.54) whom Amurack "shouldest pursue to death" (3.2.53) instead:

The Gods forbid that such a heinous deed
 With *my consent* should ever be decreed;
 And rather than thou shouldst it bring to pass,
 If all the army of Amazons

 Will be sufficient to withhold the same,
 Assure thyself that Fausta means to fight
 'Gainst Amurack, for to maintain the right. (3.2.164-70, emphasis mine)

Fausta shows confidence in the military power she commands and upholds her strong determination by emphasizing the importance of her consent in her daughter's marriage. In declaring war against Amurack, Fausta also performs a speech act; by performing an action with her utterance, Fausta shows that her words carry considerable weight. Fausta's vehement disapproval of the match is especially interesting in the light of the early modern English xenophobic anxiety about turning Turk. Traditionally, Europeans are the ones that have qualms about interracial marriages with the cultural other. But in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, the opposite is true. Iphigina, the militant Amazonian-Turkish princess, seconds her mother's decision to fight her father's decree and declares her will to follow her mother's path: "[t]his heart, this hand, yea and this blade, should be/ A readier means to finish that decree" (3.2.170).

Throughout their domestic dispute, Fausta demonstrates her superior faculty of reasoning and her strength of character. Although prior to their argument about Iphigina's marital choice Amurack has seen Fausta as "the apple of [his] eye" (3.2.182), once Fausta "dare[s] to presume" and "upbraid [Amurack] in this spiteful sort" (3.2.174, 178), she immediately becomes "a prattling dame" (3.2.179) to him. According to Amurack, even

“The proudest kings and keisars of the land / Are glad to feed [him] in [his] fantasy” of grandeur (3.2.175-76). Hence, Amurack swears “No, by the heavens, first will I lose my Crown, / My wife, my children, yea, my life and all” (3.2.179-80) before he will suffer such indignity from his own wife. Agitated by Fausta’s “threat’ning words thunder[ing] in [his] ears,” Amurack “rise[s] in a rage from [his] chair” (3.2.171) and banishes both Fausta and Iphigena from his “land” under penalty of death (3.2.187): “Fausta, thou which Amurack / Did tender erst as the apple of mine eye / Avoid my court / and if thou lov’st thy life / Approach not nigh unto my regiment” (3.2.181-84).⁸⁰ In response to her banishment, Fausta shows strength rather than weakness of character. Instead of reacting to her banishment emotionally, Fausta stays level-headed and uses the faculty of reason to deduce the origin of the mistreatment by her husband. She concludes that her “delay” (3.2.190) in standing up to Amurack’s domination is exactly what has caused her present woes: “Had Fausta, then, when Amurack begun / With spiteful speeches to control and check, / Sought to prevent it by her martial force, / This banishment had never hapt to me” (3.2.195-98). Rather than seeing her banishment as a result of her being too presumptuous or overbearing, Fausta sees it as a result of her “loath[ing] the broils of Mars,” (3.2.203) and of not having resorted to “martial force” earlier enough to counter against Amurack’s suppression. Delving deeper into the source of her marital woes, Fausta identifies self-repression and self-annihilation as the cause of her misery. Trying to avoid marital conflicts, Fausta “bridled [her] thoughts and pressed down [her] rage,” (3.2.204) whenever Amurack tried to “control and check” her power “with spiteful speeches” (3.2.196). But “[i]n recompense” (3.2.205) of the sacrifices that she has made to preserve matrimonial peace, Fausta ruminates, she has received this “woeful

banishment” (3.2.206). Upon second thought, Fausta reconfigures her “woeful banishment” as freedom from tyranny (3.2.206): “Woeful, said I? Nay, happy I did mean, / If that be happy which doth set one free” (3.2.207-08), reconfiguring her marriage to Amurack as a yoke to be happily rid of.

The metaphors that Fausta uses to describe the source of her unjust banishment reveal how she views the conjugal relationship between Amurack and herself. Even though Fausta’s title of “Empress over all the triple world” (3.2.132) is revoked and she is “banish’d now from palace and from pomp” (3.2.133), Fausta still retains her regal authority and dignity when commenting on her marital problems. First, Fausta compares Amurack to “the wanton colt” that is best “tamed in his youth” (3.2.191), figuratively seeing herself as a horse trainer and her husband as a recalcitrant horse by implication. Then, she speaks of her wrongs in medical/physiological terms: “Wounds must be cured when they be fresh and green; / And pleurisies, when they begin to breed, / With little care are driven away with speed” (3.2.192-94). The second metaphor is more ambiguous involving two types of bodily afflictions, external “wounds” and internal “pleurisies.” These “wounds” and “pleurisies” could either refer to the marital conflicts between Amurack and Fausta, or more likely, they could point to Amurack’s insolence as “wounds” on Fausta’s body, making Amurack literally the source of her “injuries.” Finally, Fausta uses yet another animal image that casts Amurack as an unnatural and ungrateful “youngling” (3.2.200) who repays his parent with pain: “But the Echinus, fearing to be gored, / Doth keep her younglings in her paunch so long, / Til, when their pricks be waxen long and sharp, / They put their dam at length to double pain” (3.2.199-202). In animal-related imagery, Fausta puts herself in a position of authority to tame and

curb the young; in medical tropes, Fausta reconfigures Amurack's insolence as the diseased part of her body that needs to be "cured" or "driven away" (3.2.192, 194). All these metaphors reinforce the idea that "delay" in standing up for herself in her marital conflicts "is dangerous, and procured harm" (3.2.190). Last but not least, after analyzing the source of her woes, Fausta decides to take immediate action to "revenge her wrong" (3.2.210), showing that she has learned a lesson from the past: "My sword with help of all Amazons / Shall make [Amurack] soon repent his foolishness" (3.3.50).

On her way to muster an army of Amazons, Fausta encounters Medea, the Oriental enchantress. During the encounter between Fausta and Medea, both Fausta and Medea challenge and invert the conventional gender ideology. When asked about "the cause" (3.2.140) of her "strange and sudden banishment" (3.2.124), Fausta replies Medea, "'Twas neither treason, nor yet felony / But for because I blam'd his foolishness" (3.2.141-42). It is interesting that Fausta justifies her rebuke of Amurack and, eventually, her rebellion by putting the blame on "his foolishness" (3.2.142). By strict traditional gender standards in the Elizabethan marital ideology, verbal disagreements would constitute disobedience to the head of the household, hence "domestic treason" in the figurative sense.⁸¹ But even by looser standards, waging war on the emperor would definitely constitute "treason" (3.2.141). Although Medea launches an ideological celebratory praise of Alphonsus, claiming that "he is born to be / The ruler of a mighty Monarchy" (3.3.59-60) and warns Fausta she will regret her disdain to "join Alphonsus with Iphigina" soon enough (3.3.70), she does stand by Fausta's decision and tell her to "Pack to your country, and in readiness / Select the army of Amazones . . . march with your female troop / To Naples Town, to succor Amurack; / And so, by marriage of

Iphigina, / You soon shall drive the danger clean away” (3.3.82-87). Medea entrusts tremendous power in Fausta’s hands, encouraging her to go “succor Amurack” (3.3.85) and “drive the danger clean away” (3.3.87), inverting the usual cultural assumption about the knight in shining armor in succor of the damsel in distress.

As Medea has prophesized, in the battle between Amurack and Alphonsus, the Prince of Aragon ends up winning the upper hand. Even when the Turkish kings seem to be devastated, Fausta stays strong and composed, offering pragmatic advice and strong leadership. Just after Amurack is taken captive, and his allies—Crocon, king of Arabia, and Faustus, king of Babylon—are fleeing for life, Queen Fausta comes on stage with her army of Amazons. Amazed with what she witnesses, Fausta exclaims:

You Turkish Kings, what sudden flight is this?
 What means the men, which for their valiant prowess
 Were dreaded erst clean through the triple world,
 Thus cowardly to turn their backs and fly? (5.1.20-23)

As if she were in a world turned upside down, Fausta questions the masculinity of the “Turkish Kings” (5.1.20) and call them cowards for “turn[ing] their backs and fly[ing]” from Alphonsus (5.1.23). As if this were not bad news enough, Crocon, the king of Arabia, informs Fausta that their “might King, and [her] approved spouse” (5.1.36), Amurack, was taken “prisoner, by Alphonsus’ hands” (5.1.40) and unless “[she] succor soon do bring” (5.1.42), Fausta will “lose [her] spouse, and [they] shall want [their] King” (5.1.42). Upon hearing the disheartening news, Iphigina cries out, “Oh hapless hap, oh dire and cruel fate!” (5.1.43) launching an idiosyncratic lament questioning the

injustice of her father's fate. Fausta, on the other hand, immediately stops her daughter from indulging in self-pity, "Iphigina, leave off these woeful tunes: / It is not words can cure and ease this wound, / But warlike swords: not tears but sturdy spears" (5.1.54-56). In time of crisis, Fausta shows practical wisdom, savvy leadership, and a strong determination, "I mean not for to sleep / Until he is free, or we him company keep. / March on, my mates" (5.1.61-63).

Not only is Fausta, the Amazonian queen, described as a powerful martial figure, but Iphigina, the Turkish princess, is also depicted as a strong Amazonian warrior. Iphigina seems to be somewhat eclipsed by the strength and power of Fausta whenever they come on stage together as mother and daughter, but when she shows up on stage as the martial maid pursuing Alphonsus, Iphigina becomes the shining star. Up until this point, all the stage directions involving the battle between Amurack and Alphonsus show Alphonsus reaping the victor's glory by chasing after his enemies who flee away in fear: [*Strike up Alarum. Fly Amurack; follow Alphonsus and take him prisoner*]. Thus, it is all the more striking when Alphonsus shows up as the one fleeing away from Iphigina on stage: [*Strike up alarum: fly Alphonsus, follow Iphigina.*] Iphigina derides Alphonsus's act of cowardice with a sarcastic tone, making an inference to their inversion of gender roles: "How now, Alphonsus! You which never yet / Could meet your equal in the feats of arms, / How haps it now that in such sudden sort / You fly the presence of a silly maid?" (5.1.64-67). Then, Iphigina challenges Alphonsus's masculinity by mocking his lack of physical prowess: "What, have you found mine arm of such a force / As that you think your body over-weak / For to withstand the fury of my blows?" (5.1.68-70).

Due to his infatuation with Iphigina, Alphonsus becomes physically and psychologically vulnerable in front of her, inverting the conventional gender power dynamics. Although Alphonsus tries to defend himself against Iphigina's verbal attacks, his martial prowess and masculine honor still ends up being undercut by Iphigina. Alphonsus tries to salvage his "honour" (5.1.78) by saying that never shall any creature "live to see Alphonsus fly the field, / From any king or keisar whosome'er" (5.1.75-76), but action speaks louder than words. He ends up undercutting his claim himself. When Alphonsus tries to explain his effeminate behavior away by blaming it on love that "hath so benumbed [his] wit" (5.2.10), Iphigina retorts, "Your noble acts were fitter to be writ / Within the Tables of dame Venus' son / Than in god Mars his warlike registers" (5.2.12-14), challenging his long-standing reputation as an invincible warrior. After comparing her own martial strength with his cowardly actions, Iphigina comments on his ineptitude as a leader by comparing his foolish wantonness with the heroic feats of his subordinates: "Whenas your Lords are hacking helms abroad / And make their spears to shiver in the air, / Your mind is busied in fond Cupid's toys" (5.2.15-17). Finally, Iphigina assumes the role of Alphonsus's mentor and advises him to focus his attention on the battle and finish up what he came to do, "Come on, i' faith, I'll teach you for to know / We came to fight, and not to love, I trow" (5.2.21-22).

Not only does the power dynamics between Iphigina and Alphonsus invert traditional gender stereotypes, but the courtship plot in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* also reverse xenophobic plotlines in which the dangerous allure of Islamic women is depicted. In early modern culture, Islamic women usually function as the prototype of the seductive enchantress who lures European men with sensual pleasures and worldly riches. But in

this play, it is Alphonsus, the European king, who promises Iphigina, the Amazonian-Turkish princess, the title of “Monarch of the world” (5.2.31) as long as she agrees “to be Alphonsus’s bride” (5.2.41):

ALPHONSUS: Nay, virgin, stay. and if thou wilt vouchsafe
 To entertain Alphonsus’ simple suit,
 Thou shalt erelong be Monarch of the world:
 All christened Kings, with all your Pagan dogs,
 Shall bend their knees unto Iphigina:
 The Indian soil shall be thine at command,
 Where every step thou settest on the ground
 Shall be received on the golden mines:
 Rich Pactolus, that river of account,
 Which doth descend from top of Tmolus Mount,
 Shall be thine own, and all the world beside,
 If you will grant to be Alphonsus’ bride. (5.2.29-41)

The language in Alphonsus’s proposal speech is reminiscent of the temptation of Christ in the gospel of Matthew.⁸² Just as Satan tries to tempt Jesus with “all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them” (Matthew 4:8), Alphonsus seeks to win over Iphigina’s heart by offering her worldly glory and infinite wealth. Just as Jesus sternly rejects Satan’s temptation, Iphigina scornfully declines to be Alphonsus’s “wedded spouse” (5.2.60): “Alphonsus bride? Nay, villain, do not think / That fame or riches can so rule my thoughts / As for to make me love and fancy him / Whom I do hate and . . . despise”

(5.2.50-53). Failing to “move [Iphigina’s] mind” with his “entreaty” (5.2.59), Alphonsus resorts to wooing her with force and swears to make her his “concubine” (5.2.62):

ALPHONSUS: Nay, then, proud peacock: since thou art so stout
 As that entreaty will not move thy mind
 For to consent to be my wedded spouse,
 Thou shalt, in spite of Gods and Fortune too,
 Serve high Alphonsus as a concubine. (5.2.58-62)

After Alphonsus has defeated and captured the rest of the Turkish kings, along with Fausta and Iphigina, he proposes to marry Iphigina a second time, thinking that they “would with very willing mind / Yield for [his] spouse the fair Iphigina” (5.3.56) provided that “without delay, / Fausta and [Amurack] may scot-free ‘scape away” (5.3.60). Much to his disappointment, Amurack denigrates Alphonsus as a “villain” (5.3.62), a “traitor” (5.3.63), and a “dunghill Knight” (5.3.70) and refuses to “yield his daughter, yea, his only joy . . . for the fear of death” (5.3.71-72) though he is “clapped up in Irons and with bolts of steel” (5.3.73). Alphonsus threatens to undo them all in a fit of rage: “since that thou dost deny / For to fulfill that which in gentle-wise/Alphonsus’ craves, both thou and all thy train/ Shall with your lives requite that injury” (5.3.81-84).

So far, Fausta and Iphigina have been depicted as extraordinarily strong and powerful figures, yet they are also quick to show pragmatic wisdom and plead for mercy when their lives and freedom are at stake. After Alphonsus threatens to haul everyone into prison, Fausta steps up to plead for mercy. She kneels down and plays the card of a helpless elderly woman:

FAUSTA: Oh sacred Prince, if that the salt-brine tears,
 Distilling down poor Fausta's withered cheeks,
 Can mollify the hardness of your heart,
 Lessen this judgment, which you in thy rage
 Hast given on thy luckless prisoners. (5.3.90-94)

Fausta, who has never shown any sign of weakness under any circumstances, is able to transform herself into the role of a poor old woman and use rhetoric to her advantage to salvage the situation. After Alphonsus rejects Fausta's plea, Iphigina also kneels down and "plead for pity at [Alphosus's] feet" (5.3.103) with her "woeful prayers" (5.3.102). Iphigina tries to rekindle the "love" (5.3.107) that Alphonsus professed to her when he "All clad in glittering arms encounter[ed] her" (5.3.106) for the first time. She asks Alphonsus to "Revoke [his] sentence" (5.3.110) for the love that he "did protest/ [He] then did bear unto Iphigina" (5.3.107-8), holding him accountable for his own words. However, after being rejected by Iphigina, Alphonsus is too proud to accept her and intends to retaliate: "If that you had, when first I proffer made,/Yielded to me, mark, what I promised you,/I would have done" (5.3.103-5), but "since you did deny, / Look for denial at Alphonsus' hands" (5.3.105-6).

Although Iphigina has been reduced to a lowly prisoner of war, Alphonsus's father, Carinus, intercedes for the sake of Iphigina and speaks highly of her future daughter-in-law. Amazed at his callousness, Carinus wonders why Alphonsus "whose years are prone to Cupid's snares / Can suffer such a Goddess as this dame / Thus for to shed such store of Crystal tears" (5.3.117-19). Though the Turkish camp is clearly

powerless and Iphigina is taken as a war captive, Carinus still speaks of her as a “Goddess” (5.3.118), taking pity on her “Crystal tears”(5.3.119), and avows that “Her sighs and sobs in twain [his] heart do rent” (5.3.120). It is worthwhile to notice the language that Carinus uses when speaking of the relationship between Alphonsus and Iphigina. While it was common to hold Islamic women responsible for ensnaring men in a romantic relationship, Carinus shifts the emphasis to Alphonsus and his age, “Alphonus . . . you whose years are prone to Cupid’s snares” (5.3.116-17), referring to love as “Cupid’s snares” (5.3.117), thereby avoiding misogynistic language.

Not only does Carinus speak highly of Iphigina, but he also helps Alphonsus overcome the anger caused by her rejection by reconfiguring Iphigina into a worthy maid precisely because of her earlier rejection. Alphonsus admits his love for Iphigina to Carinus, “Like power, dear father, had she over me, / Until for love I looking to receive / Love back again, not only was denied, / But also taunted in most spiteful sort” (5.3.169-72) which made him “loathe that which [he] erst did love” (5.3.173). Carinus then chooses to use the martial language that Alphonsus is familiar with to explain why Alphonsus should put his grudge about Iphigina’s rejection away: “What know you not, that Castles are not won / At first assault, and women are not wooed / When first their suitors proffer love to them?” (5.3.176-78). Not only does he speak of the rejection as natural but also reconfigures it as a virtue, contextualizing their encounter not as a romantic interlude but as a military battle as indeed it was:

As for my part, I should account that maid

A wanton wench, unconstant, lewd and light,

That yields the field before she venture fight

Especially unto her mortal foe,

As you were then unto Iphigina. (5.3.180-84)

Carinus successfully eases away Alphonsus's grudge against Iphigina by reminding him that he was a "mortal foe" (5.3.183) to her in the battlefield, and if she had agreed to his proposal under those circumstances, she would not be worthy of his love as she should be considered "A wanton wench, unconstant, lewd and light" (5.3.181). As Carinus sees that his son, "so long / Been trained up in bloody broils of Mars," (5.3.193-94) is fitter "To enter Lists and combat with [his] foes / Than court fair Ladies in God Cupid's tents" (5.3.195-96), he offers to be Alphonsus's "spokesman" (5.3.197) and as long as Iphigina "consent[s]" (5.3.198), the match is made.

Even after Alphonsus's heart is softened by Carinus's intercession, Iphigina still does not consent to the marriage right away in order to gain as much leverage as possible. The emphasis on Iphigina's consent should not be overlooked. The stakes are obviously high for Iphigina; after all she is a captive, and if she does not "agree" (5.3.209) she shall not "be free" (5.3.210). However, Iphigina does not "agree" (5.3.209) immediately to Carinus' proposal and instead questions the sincerity of Alphonsus's love: "If that your son had loved me so well, / Why did he not inform me of the same?" (5.3.211-12). Carinus reminds Iphigina about the "ample proffers he did make" (5.3.214) to her during their first "hand-to-hand" encounter (5.3.215). Iphigina in turn cleverly dismisses Alphonsus's first proposal on the grounds that "Cupid cannot enter in the breast / Where Mars before had took possession" (5.3.217-18) and argues that it "was no time to talk of

Venus' games / When all our fellows were pressed in the wars" (5.3.219-20). Carinus himself made exactly the same argument earlier and urges Iphigina to "let that pass" (5.3.222) and focus on the present situation: "now canst thou be content / To love Alphonsus and become his spouse?" (5.3.223-24). Iphigina replies, "Aye, if the high Alphonsus could vouchsafe / To entertain me as his wedded spouse" (5.3.225-26), possibly a caustic remark about Alphonsus's previous threat to make her his "concubine" (5.2.62) by force. Now that the Turkish kings have been defeated and captured, Iphigina does not have much leverage as a captive, hence her reference to Alphonsus as "high Alphonsus" (5.3.225). The verbs that Iphigina uses, "vouchsafe / To entertain" (5.3.225-26), and the double emphasis of the noun "wedded spouse" (5.3.226) all point to her insecurity as a war captive. Although politically speaking, she is totally powerless, she still manages to maintain her dignity and negotiates an optimal outcome for someone in her shoes.

Now that Iphigina is willing to show her vulnerable side, Alphonsus welcomes her concession and expresses his "joy, since that [he] now ha[s] got / That which [he] long desired in [his] heart" (5.3.233-35):

ALPHONSUS: If that he could? What, dost thou doubt of that?

Jason did jet whenas he had obtained

The golden fleece by wise Medea's art:

The Greeks rejoiced when they had subdued

The famous bulwarks of most stately Troy;

But all their mirth was nothing in respect

Of this, my joy, since that I now have got
That which I long desired in my heart. (5.3.228-35)

It is revealing that Alphonsus uses the myth of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece to express the overwhelming joy he feels about his imminent marriage to Iphigina. In Greek mythology, Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece was a means to an end—Jason's ultimate goal was to regain the throne and kingdom of Iolcus usurped by his uncle Pelias.

Alphonsus, unlike Jason, has already righted his wrongs by dethroning his uncle, Flaminius, in the first half of the play. For Alphonsus to say that "all [the] mirth" of Jason obtaining the Golden Fleece and all the "joy" of the Greeks subduing Troy after a ten-year siege, "was nothing in respect / Of this, my joy" (5.3.233-34) is a strong piece of evidence of his love for Iphigina.

In a dynastic marriage, the role of personal desire and individual choice is minimized or irrelevant, and it is usually up to parents to decide whom their children will marry to maximize financial and political gains. But in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, Iphigina's consent is asked first, then Fausta's, and finally Amurack's, which is a complete reversal of the patriarchal hierarchy. Only after gaining Iphigina's "consent" (5.3.198), does Carinus ask Fausta's opinion of the prospective match, "But what says Fausta to her daughter's choice?" (5.3.236), highlighting the importance of Iphigina's free will in making her marital choice. Fausta's response reinforces the importance of Iphigina's consent, "Fausta doth say, the Gods have been her friends, / To let her live to see Iphigina / Bestowed so unto her heart's consent" (5.3.237-39). Finally, they "call forth Amurack" (5.3.245) to "see what he doth say unto this match" (5.3.246). At first,

Amurack engages in an intense mental debate: “Consent? Nay, rather die / Should I consent to give Iphigina / Into the hands of such a beggar’s brat?” (5.3.263-65). But then he realizes that he “deceive[s]” himself for “Alphonsus is the son unto a King” (5.3.267) and “worthy of [his] daughter’s love” (5.3.268). However, Amurack’s final decision is reached by considering Iphigina’s consent and Fausta’s support of her decision: “She is agreed, and Fausta is content: / Then Amurack will not be discontent” (5.3.270). Because both his daughter and wife have already given their consent to the marital proposal, hence Amurack agrees to the match as well. The dynamics between the European side and the Turkish camp changes right away as Alphonsus expresses his joyous gratitude to Fausta, “Thanks, mighty Empress, for your gentleness; / And if Alphonsus can at any time / With all his power requite this courtesy, / You shall perceive how kindly he doth take / Your forwardness in this his happy chance” (5.3.240-44).

In the end, not only does Amurack consent to their wedding, but also offers an incredibly generous dowry to Alphonsus:

Here, brave Alphonsus, take thou at my hand
 Iphigina: I give her unto thee;
 And for her dowry, when her father dies,
 Thou shalt possess the Turkish Emperie.
 Take her, I say; and live King Nestor’s years:
 So would the Turk and all his Noble Peers. (5.3.270-75)

Although the transfer of the Turkish empery unto Alphonsus seems to make the match between Iphigina and Alphonsus a dynastic marriage, the heavy emphasis on freedom of

choice and sincerity of affection makes the match more akin to the ideal of companionate marriage emerging in the early modern period than the model of kinship marriage prevalent in aristocratic circles.

Although some elements of the play show traces of idiosyncratic celebrations of Europeans in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, the power dynamics between the two interracial couples, Fausta and Amurack, and Iphigina and Alphonsus, reveal a departure from the traditional racialized gender ideology. Both Fausta, the Amazonia queen, and Iphigina, the Turkish princess, occupy powerful positions throughout the play. Fausta not only verbally challenges her husband, Amurack, but actually musters a whole army of Amazons in order to right her wrongs. Far from being contained within the institution of marriage, Fausta embraces her martial nature and leads an army of Amazons to fight against and eventually succor her husband in war. While fighting against Alphonsus in battle, not only does Iphigina show verbal eloquence but also martial prowess, challenging Alphonsus's masculinity.

Notes

¹ R. B. Outhwaite, "Introduction" in *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London: Europa Publications, 1981) 11.

² Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977); David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Jennifer S. Hirsch and Holly Wardlow eds. *Modern Loves: The Anthropology of Romantic Courtship and Companionate Marriage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

³ For a debate about the two models of marriage, the hierarchical or patriarchal versus the companionate, see Frances Elizabeth Dolan, *Marriage and Violence: The Early Modern Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) 27.

⁴ For the tensions within the Protestant model of companionate marriage, see Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 38-47; Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford eds. *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) 131-37; Edmund Tilney, *The flower of friendship: A Renaissance dialogue contesting marriage* ed. Valérie Wayne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁵ Dolan, 27. The analogy of the relationship between Christ and church and that between husband and wife originates in *Ephesians* 5: 22-24. As the annotations in The Geneva Bible (1599) shows how the scripture was appropriated to justify the subjection of wives within marriage, I am citing the biblical verses as well as their annotations below:

22 (*) (7) Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, (8) as unto the Lord.

(*) Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1.

(7) Now he descendeth to a family, dividing orderly all the parts of a family. And he saith that the duty of wives consisteth herein, to be obedient to their husbands. (8) The first argument, for they cannot be disobedient to their husbands, but they must resist God also, who is the author of this subjection.

23 (*) (9) For the husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is the head of the Church, (10) and the same is the Saviour of *his* body.

(*) 1 Corinthians 11:3.

(9) A declaration of the former saying; Because God hath made the man head of the woman in matrimony, as Christ is the head of the Church. (10) Another argument; Because the good estate of the wife dependeth on the man, so that this submission is not only just, but also very profitable; as also the salvation of the Church is of Christ, although far otherwise.

The Church: so the husband ought to nourish, govern and defend his wife from perils.

24 (11) Therefore as the Church is in subjection to Christ, even so *let* the wives *be* to their husbands in everything.

(11) The conclusion of the wives' duties towards their husbands.

<http://www.genevabible.org/Geneva.html>

⁶ As marital and political relations are expressed as a relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, the analogy “consolidates hierarchy, marking domestic insurrection, in the home or in the state, as treason” (Dutton 345). See Richard Dutton and Jean Elizabeth Howard, eds. *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: The Histories* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005). Also see Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 15-25. For a discussion of the concept of family as a microcosm of the state in history plays, see Robert B. Pierce, *Shakespeare’s History Plays: the Family and the State* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971).

⁷ John Wing, *The Crowne Conjugal or the Spouse Royall. A Discovery of the Honor and Happines of Christian Matrimony* (London, 1620), P7^{r-v}. In *A Wedding Sermon* (1608), The Bishop of Salisbury also presents a series of hierarchical binaries based on the microcosm/macrocosm analogy: Prince and subject, husband and wife, master and servant, and parents and children. The Bishop of Salisbury, *A Wedding Sermon* (London, 1608).

⁸ Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 266.

⁹ John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* (London, 1598) 149.

¹⁰ William Gouge, *Workes* (London, 1627) 1:188-89.

¹¹ William Whately, *A Bride-Bush* (London, 1619), 107, 159-60.

¹² Francis Dillingham, *A Golden Key opening the Locke To Eternall Happiness* (London, 1609) 11^r.

¹³ Judith Mary Curlee, “‘Tis a Merry-Age’: *Comic Discourse of Marriage in Early Modern England*,” Diss. (Emory University, 1996). Also see Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003). Richard Brathwaite, *Ar’t Asleep Husband: A boulster lecture, stored with all variety of witty jests, merry tales, and other pleasant passages; extracted from the choicest flowers of philosophy, poetry, ancient and moderne history* (London, 1640); John Taylor, *Wit and Mirth* (London, 1628); *A Banquet of Jest: Or Change of cheare: Being a collection of moderne jests. Witty jeeres. Pleasant taunts. Merry tales.* (London, 1630).

¹⁴ Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britannia, or A Garden of Heroical Diuises* (London, 1612) 132.

¹⁵ Peacham, 132.

¹⁶ Peacham, 132.

¹⁷ See Angela Vanhaelen, *Comic Print and Theatre in Early Modern Amsterdam: Gender, Childhood and the City* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) 108, and N. Z. Davis, “Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe,” *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975) 124-51.

¹⁸ See Peter Stallybrass, “The World Turned Upside Down: Inversion, Gender and the State” in Valerie Wayne ed., *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 201-20, 202. These types of

broadsheets are discussed in David Kunzle, "The World Upside Down: The Iconography of a European Broadsheet Type" *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society* ed. Barbara Babcock (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) 39-94, in Peter Stallybrass, "The World Turned Upside Down: Inversion, Gender and the State," *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* ed. Valerie Wayne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 201-20, and in David Kunzle, *The Early Comic Strip: Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from 1450-1825* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

¹⁹ De Sousa, 12.

²⁰ Barbara A. Babcock, *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, ed. Barbara A. Babcock (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) 14.

²¹ Montrose, 36. For a survey and discussion of Amazons in Elizabethan literature, see Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester, 1981) 5-17; Gabriele Bernhard Jackson, "Topical Ideology: Witches, Amazons, and Shakespeare's Joan of Arc" *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988): 40-65; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 234-9.

²² Bernard Lewis commented on "the powerful fascination" with which Europeans viewed the Ottoman Empire and numerous captivity narratives described in great detail the "horror" and cruelty of their Islamic masters. Bernard Lewis, *Cultures in Conflict: Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

²³ De Sousa, 10.

²⁴ Jeanne Addison Roberts, *The Shakespearean Wild: Geography, Genus, and Gender* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991) 101.

²⁵ Painter 2:159-61.

²⁶ “Amazon” was thought to mean “without a breast.” On the etymologies of Amazon, see Celeste Turner Wright, “The Amazons in Elizabethan Literature,” *Studies in Philology* 37 (1940): 433-56, 52.

²⁷ Paster, 234.

²⁸ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993) 234.

²⁹ Paster, 236.

³⁰ De Sousa, 16. For example, a noble and heroic Amazon, Penthesilea, appears alongside other famous warrior queens in Jonson’s *Masque of Queens* (1609). See Ben Jonson, *The Complete Masques* ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

³¹ Geraldo U. de Sousa sees Hippolyta as “submissive” (28) and argues that she has been “silenced, absorbed, and acclimated into a patriarchy, whose values oppose those of the Amazon matriarchy” (25). See Geraldo U. de Sousa, *Shakespeare’s Cross-Cultural Encounters* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) for a detailed discussion. Olson argues that marital union is predicated upon the wife’s obedience to her husband, reading the play in terms of prescriptive theories of gender and marriage. Paul A. Olson, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream and the Meaning of Court Marriage” *ELH* 24.2 (1957): 95-119. For a reading of the play as an affirmation of patriarchal order and hierarchy, see

Shirley Nelson Garner, "A Midsummer Night's Dream: 'Jack shall have Jill; / Nought shall go ill,'" *Women's Studies* 9 (1981): 47-63, and Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Michael Kerrigan and Douglas Freake also assume that Hippolyta will automatically be tamed by Theseus because of their impending marriage. See Michael Kerrigan, *A Guide to A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998) and Douglas Freake, "A *Midsummer Night's Dream* as a Comic Version of the Theseus Myth," in *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* ed. Dorothea Kehler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998) 259-74.

³² Louis Adrian Montrose, 65. Although *Titus Andronicus* also begins with the military victory of Romans over Goths and the conciliatory marriage of Tamora to Saturninus, the Roman patriarchal social order quickly disintegrates into bloody chaos. By no means can Tamora be considered as "subdued" by the Romans.

³³ It is reductive to assume that marriage necessarily leads to female subjugation in the early modern period. Erickson observes that "wives at all social levels . . . managed finances on their own behalf and jointly with their husbands" (205) Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993). For a teleological reading in which "the play's beginning both predicts and contains its end" (Schwarz 208), see James H. Kavanagh, "Shakespeare in Ideology," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (New York: Methuen, 1985), 144-65. James H. Kavanagh reads the play in terms of a triumphant patriarchal hierarchy and argues that Hippolyta "learns properly to submit to the man who literally won her in conquest" (153). Also see G. K. Hunter, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in *Shakespeare:*

Modern Essays in Criticism ed. Leonard F. Dean, rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 90-102; C. L. Barber, "May Games and Metamorphoses on a Midsummer's Night," *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959): 119-62. For a psychoanalytic reading that affirms the centrality of masculine power, see Madelon Gohlke, "'I woo'd thee with my sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays* ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 170-87.

³⁴ See William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London, 1622), William Perkins, William Whately, *A bride-bush: or, A direction for married persons. Plainely describing the duties common to both, and peculiar to each of them. By performing of which, marriage shall prooue a great helpe to such, as now for want of performing them, doe find it a little hell.* (London, 1619); John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Household Government: for the Ordering of Private Families, According to the Direction of God's Word* (London, 1598); *Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1559); *The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights* (London, 1632).

³⁵ Paul A. Olson, "A Midsummer Night's Dream and the Meaning of Court Marriage," *ELH* 24.2 (June 1957): 95-119. Olson, 101.

³⁶ Gabriel Rieger, "'I woo'd thee with my sword, / And won thy love doing thee injuries': The Erotic Economies of A Midsummer Night's Dream" *The Upstart Crow* 28 (2009): 73.

³⁷ Gabriel Rieger, 73.

³⁸ Erickson has observed that in general, widows were designated as “the executrix and the principal beneficiary” of their husband’s wills and has seen widowhood as a means for property to return to women after the decease of their husband. Erickson, 227.

³⁹ Theseus’s position as a victim in his simile also stands in sharp contrast to his notorious past—his ravishing of Perigouna, and his Aegles, Ariadne, and Antiopa (2.1.78-80)—Theseus now is able to mitigate his sexual desire and await his wedding day with patience. In contrast to what we learn from his past, “brute force has now given way to love and law” (Blits 20). For an account of Theseus’s romantic exploits, see Plutarch, *Theseus*, 8.2-3, 20; 26.1-2; 29.1-2; Ovid, *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, The Arthur Golding Translation, ed. John Frederick Nimes (London: Macmillan, 1965), 8.174ff.

⁴⁰ Olson, 103.

⁴¹ Olson, 101.

⁴² De Sousa, 19.

⁴³ De Sousa argues that the patriarchal trio in the play, Theseus, Egeus, and Oberon, are “ideologically linked” (20). In the beginning of the play, Theseus sides with Egeus and “affirms the centrality of the father to this system” (20) but in act four, he overrules Egeus’s decision. When Theseus overrules Egeus in act four, reversing his own statement of law, “he exposes a gap between patriarchal theory and the men who act it out, which in turn interrupts the connection of men to one another” (Schwarz 212).

⁴⁴ See Harold Bloom, *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: William Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010) 21.

⁴⁵ Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000) 40. Titania, Hermia, and Thisbe are all subversive female roles that embody some of “the uncontrollable, carnivalesque impulses” that operate in the play “despite the best efforts of several patriarchs to rearrange or suppress [their] natural impulses” (Bloom 36-7).

⁴⁶ The story of how Hippolyta came to be Theseus’s wife is narrated in William Painter’s *The Palace of Pleasure*: “Theseus for no offer that she coulde make, woulde he deliver Hippolyta, with whom he was so farre in love, that he carried her home with him, and afterward toke her to wife, of whom hee had a sonne called Hippolitus” (2:163). William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575), ed. Joseph Jacobs (New York: 1966). Vol. 2, pp. 159-61.

⁴⁷ Blits, 21. North’s translation of Plutarch’s “Life of Theseus” offers a narrative of the Amazonian attack on Athens. Plutarch, “The Life of Theseus” *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* trans. Thomas North (London: David Nutt, 1579). Boccaccio’s *Teseida delle Nozze d’Emilia* Book I also provides a full account of Theseus’s war with the Amazons in Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Book of Theseus* trans. Bernadette Marie McCoy (New York: Medieval Text Association, 1974).

⁴⁸ Blits, 21.

⁴⁹ See for example, *Coriolanus*, 2.1.176; *Julius Caesar*, 1.1.31, 51; 5.1.108; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 3.13.141; 4.14.20; 5.1.66; 5.2.108.

⁵⁰ Jan H. Blits, *The Soul of Athens: Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003) 20.

⁵¹ See Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*, 870; see also Bocaccio, 1.134; 2.18-24; Statius, 12.519ff. Plutarch tells of the "solemn oath" concluding the Amazon war in Plutarch, *Theseus*, 27.5; *North's Plutarch*, [1579], 1:58).

⁵² Blits, 20. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "solemnity" always refers to a wedding or a wedding celebration: 4.1.133, 184; 5.1.355; 4.1.87.

⁵³ Tamora is not only "brought to Rome, / To beautify [Titus'] triumphs and return," (1.1.104-05) as a "captive" under "Roman yoke" (1.1.106), but her "first-born son," Alarbus, is also "slaughter'd in the streets" (1.1.107), his "entrails feed[ing] the sacrificing fire" (1.1.139) of Roman religious rites.

⁵⁴ Blits, 21.

⁵⁵ The definition of "admirable" in OED: To be wondered at; wonderful, surprising, marvelous. For example: 1639 T. FULLER *Hist. Holy Warre* I. vi. 7 It may justly seem admirable how that senselesse religion should gain so much ground on Christianitie, and 1660 MILTON *Readie Way Free Commonw.* 6 Not only strange and admirable, but lamentable to think on.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/2555?redirectedFrom=admirable%20#eid>

⁵⁶ The word "witness" could be used as a synonym of "see" but it could also mean "to bear witness to (a fact or statement); to testify to, attest; to furnish oral or written evidence of; to furnish evidence or proof of; to be a witness, spectator, or auditor of (something of interest, importance, or special concern); to experience by personal (esp. ocular) observation; to be present as an observer at; to see with ones own eyes. In early use said mainly of the eyes or the ears" OED.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/229714?rskey=VoXuHp&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>

⁵⁷ “SHAKESPEARE *Midsummer Night’s Dream* v. i. 4 Louers, and mad men haue such seething braines” appears as an example provided by OED under this definition of “seething.” <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/174839>

⁵⁸ Guite, 56.

⁵⁹ Guite, 56.

⁶⁰ See “apprehend” in OED.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/9799?redirectedFrom=apprehend%20#eid>;

⁶¹ See “comprehend” in OED.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/37847?redirectedFrom=comprehend#eid>

⁶² Garber, 223. Bottom, with his ass’s head, seems to have a perceptive view of “reason and love”: “Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays . . .” (3.1.126-28). The quarrel between Titania and Oberon may not belong to the realm of “cool reason” but it has catastrophic physical effects in the material world.

⁶³ Malcolm Guite, *Faith, Hope and Poetry: Theology and the Poetic Imagination* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010) 56.

⁶⁴ René Girard, “Myth and Ritual in Shakespeare: A *Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979) 189-212, 211.

⁶⁵ David Young, *Something of Great Constancy: The Art of A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Yale University Press, 1966) 4. Anne Barton also concludes her "Introduction" to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in *The Riverside Shakespeare* by invoking Hippolyta's lines.

⁶⁶ Schwarz, 205-6.

⁶⁷ See Peter de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie* (London, 1618). Peter de la Primaudaye uses the musical metaphor of "perfect harmonie, like as in musicke" to describe the relationship between husband and wife (Sig. Ooo2v; cf. Sig. Ooo2-0oo2v).

⁶⁸ In act one, Theseus also speaks to Hippolyta in musical terms. Theseus admits to Hyppolita: "I woo'd thee with my sword, / And won thy love, doing thee injuries" (1.1.16-17), but he promises to "wed [Hippolyta] in another key, / With pomp, with triumph and with reveling" (1.1.18-19).

⁶⁹ Gayle Rubin defines a "sex/gender system" as "a socio-historical construction of sexual identity, difference and relationship; an appropriation of human anatomical and physiological features by an ideological discourse. See Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: , 1975), pp. 157-210. A sense of the variety and complexity of sex/gender systems can be gained from two recent ethnographic collections: *Nature, culture and gender*, ed. Carol P. MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern (Cambridge: , 1980); and *Sexual Meanings: The Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality* ed. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge, 1981). For an introduction to the construction of one gender in European intellectual history, see Ian

Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

⁷⁰ Louis Adrian Montrose, "Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture, *Representations* 2 (Spring, 1983): 61-94.

⁷¹ Brown, 8.

⁷² Biblical injunctions about eradicating enemies so miscegenation and religious apostasy would not occur originate from Deuteronomy 7:1-4: "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly." King James Bible.
<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%207&version=KJV>

⁷³ I counted the two pairs of lovers, Hermia and Lysander, and Helena and Demetrius, as representing one model of romantic relationship since they (especially Lysander and Demetrius) seem to be interchangeable on stage.

⁷⁴ The play is based on the history of Alphonso I of Naples and V of Arragon (1385-1454), with no pretence to historical accuracy. See Thomas H. Dickinson, ed., *Robert Greene* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909). For a discussion on the

powers of music, magic, and enchanted sleep in *Alphonsus*, see Sarah F. Williams, “‘Singe the Enchantment for Sleepe’: Music and Bewitched Sleep in Early Modern English Drama,” *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture* ed. Christine Göttler and Wolfgang Neuber (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2008) 179-96. For a discussion of the talking brass head see Kevin LaGrandeur, “The Talking Brass Head as a Symbol of Dangerous Knowledge in *Friar Bacon* and in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*” *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 80.5(1999): 408-22. For an edited version of the play, see Mary Jeanette Sulzman, “A Critical Edition of Robert Greene’s *The Commicall Historie of Alphonsus, King of Aragon*,” Diss. (Saint Louis University, 1968). For a link between *Alphonsus* and *As You Like It* see, David Chandler, “An Incident from Greene’s *Alphonsus* in *As You Like It*” *Notes and Queries* 42.3 (1995): 317-19.

⁷⁵ Alan C. Dessen, “Robert Greene and the Theatrical Vocabulary of the Early 1590s,” *Writing Robert Greene: Essays on England’s First Notorious Professional Writer* ed. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008) 29.

⁷⁶ Dessen, 29. For example, *Alphonsus*’s boast: “I clap up Fortune in a cage of gold, / To make her turn her wheel as I think best” (2.1614-15) echoes Tamburlaine’s vaunt: “I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains, / And with my hand turn Fortune’s wheel about” (2.369-70) in C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed. *The Works of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910).

⁷⁷ Kirk Melnikoff, “That Will I See, Lead and Ile Follow Thee”: Robert Greene and the Authority of Performance” *Writing Robert Greene: Essays on England’s First*

Notorious Professional Writer ed. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008) 41.

⁷⁸ *Annals of English Drama* dates it in 1587.

⁷⁹ In terms of racial and gender dynamics, it is also interesting to note that there are no European women in the play. The only women present in the play itself are Islamic or Amazonian; the only exceptions are Venus and the Muses who appear in the Chorus and the Epilogue.

⁸⁰ Judging by the parallelism of “my court” (3.2.82) and “my regiment” (3.2.84), Amurack seems to imply that Fausta frequents both his court and his regiment, suggesting that she might hold a military function in his army.

⁸¹ As marital and political relations were expressed in terms of the microcosm and the macrocosm, the analogy “consolidates hierarchy, marking domestic insurrection, in the home or in the state, as treason” (Dutton 345). See Richard Dutton and Jean Elizabeth Howard, eds. *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: The Histories* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005). Also see Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 15-25. For a discussion of the concept of family as a microcosm of the state in history plays, see Robert B. Pierce, *Shakespeare’s History Plays: the Family and the State* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971).

⁸² See Matthew 4:8-10: “⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship

the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” The passage is also an echo of the proposal of Tamburlaine to Zenocrate in which he promises to make her “empress of the East” (1.2.46) in *Tamburlaine, Part One*: “A hundred Tartars shall attend on thee, / Mounted on steeds swifter than Pegasus; / Thy garments shall be made of Median silk, / Enchas’d with precious jewels of mine own, / More rich and valorous than Zenocrate’s My martial prizes, with five hundred men, / Won on the fifty-headed Volga's waves, / Shall we all offer to Zenocrate, / And then myself to fair Zenocrate” (1.2.91-103).

CHAPTER THREE

The Love Triangle in *Osmond, the Great Turk*

In the previous chapter, I argue that portrayals of Islamic and Amazonian women in both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* challenge the normative racialized gender ideology in the early modern period. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the conventional early modern gender, racial, and religious stereotypes are reversed in *Osmond, the Great Turk* (1622).¹ There have been very few studies of *Osmond, the Great Turk* and none has focused on the dynamics of interracial romance.² The interracial dynamics of the play are especially intriguing due to the triangulation of two Muslim men and a Christian woman in an Islamic seraglio.³ The main plot of *Osmond* is based on the story of the Sultan and Irene, the Christian slave, which was dramatized on the English stage in at least four different versions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴ The story, which originated in Matteo Bandello's *La Prima Parte de le Novelle del Bandello* (1554), was a popular one, and it first appeared in England in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1556) and later on in Richard Knolle's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603). It was also staged in a lost play by George Peele, *The Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the Fair Greek* (1594), in Thomas Goffe's *The Couragious Turke, or Amurath the First* (1627), in Gilbert Swinhoe's *The Tragedy of The Unhappy Fair Irene* (1658), and in *Irena, a Tragedy* (1664) of unknown authorship. Although in *Osmond*, Carlell Lodowick more or less follows the basic plotline of the Irene story, the triangular romantic intrigue among Despina, a Christian captive, Osmond, a moral Turk, and Melcoshus, the Tartar emperor, is Lodowick's invention.

On the early modern stage, Turks, and men in particular, are the prototype of licentious suitors while Christian women often play the role of the sanctimonious prisoners, who remain chaste in spite of persecutions. In the English playhouse, Christian resistance to the allure of Islam is often exemplified through the chastity of the Christian woman, “a figure whose virtue remains constant though she is constantly pursued by lustful Turks.”⁵ For example, Paulina, the Christian captive in Phillip Massinger’s *The Renegado*, remains chaste in spite of the incarceration and persecution of Asambeg, the lustful Ottoman viceroy in Tunis while Bess, the English lass in Thomas Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West, Part I and Part II* (1610, 1630-31), stays faithful to her English lover, Spencer, in spite of the aggressive pursuit of Mullisheg, the king of Morocco. While Muslim men are usually represented as lustful, Muslim women are often portrayed as evil seductress who lure Christian men into Islam. Voada in Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turke* (1612) and Zanthia/Abdella in John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of Malta* (1616) exemplify the negative model of aggressive Muslim hypersexuality. Contrary to stereotypical xenophobic depictions of Christian men lured into destruction by Islamic temptresses, in *Osmond*, it is Despina, the Christian captive, who seduces Osmond, the Turk. Taking up the role of the Oriental seductress only to be chastised and refuted by Osmond, Despina turns apostata and assumes great power in a Muslim court as Melcoshus’s concubine but she eventually ends up being cleansed away as a corrupting force that endangers the Turkish body politic.

Despina starts off as a stereotypical Christian maiden. Captured by two Turkish soldiers, she embodies all the virtues and traits that a Christian woman was supposed to have according to early modern cultural norms—submissiveness, passivity, selflessness,

and embracement of death over “dishonour”(2) . As a prisoner of war, Despina is an entirely passive, powerless victim who puts her enemies’ life before her own. One Tartar soldier claims her as his “prize” though she has fallen “prey” to another (1). While the two soldiers threaten to kill one another in order to “seize” on Despina, she seems the image of a sweet, innocent, and charitable maid: “unhappy maid, must I become the cause of bloodshed, tho even of Tartars our enemies, heavens forbid” (2). Submissive and docile, she resigns herself to her fate saying, “make a division of me and of my cloathes, he to whose lot I fall, Ile be his faithfull slave” (2). By equating herself with her clothing in the looting lottery, Despina assigns herself little if any value at all. She further depreciates herself saying, “Alass, why strive you for this worthlesse person, so far as lies in my ability ile serve you both” (2) in order to dissuade the soldiers from killing each other off. The two soldiers take Despina words as her consent for them to “lie with her” (2) and cast lots to decide who shall enjoy the privilege first. Despina is so helpless and desperate that she can only wish that death would save her from this horrible fate: “Would that sword that peirc’d my Noble Fathers heart, had cut me from the world, e’re this unhappie houre of my dishonour” (2). At this point, only the coincident concurrence of a violent skirmish between these two lecherous soldiers and Osmond’s deus ex machina appearance on the scene come to the rescue.

Meanwhile Melcoshus, the Tartar emperor, marches onto the stage as the victorious champion, the “conquering Prince” (5) in his full military glamour with a long procession of courtiers, captains, and prisoners behind him. While Melcoshus orders “all the Greek Prisoners of note” to be brought to their celebratory banquet so “that [the Tartars] may glory in [their] triumph over them” (3), Despina, one of the Christian

prisoners, is taken in by Osmond. At the beginning of the banquet, Despina comes up on stage as the lowly “prisoner” (4), but by the end, Melcoshus ends up being the one who “descends his throne” (5) falling into “captivity” (5). Once saved by Osmond from the two clownish soldiers, Despina’s status starts to rise. Although Despina is presented as a “present” (4) to Melcoshus, she is described by Osmond as a “jewell” that has more “value” (4) than “the citty-spoiles . . . the Empire . . . and an assurance of a happy reigne” all three of them combined together. Although technically speaking, Despina is a military captive, a “prisoner” (4), and Melcoshus’s “slave’s slave” (4), Osmond, inadvertently, turns the power dynamics between Despina and Melcoshus upside down by assigning her more value than Melcoshus’s’ empery.

Boldly attributing Despina more “value” (4) than all the Turkish empery, Osmond enrages Melcoshus and almost incurs his own “destruction” at Melcoshus’s hands (4) for belittling his emperor’s royal prerogatives. Melcoshus chastises Osmond for his devaluation of the Tartar empire: “think not that state I am now possest of, admits any comparison of happiness, yet now content with this thou dost contemne my fortune” (4). Despite Melcoshus threat of “destruction” (4), Osmond goes on to “warn” Melcoshus against looking at Despina’s face before he attempts to “unvaile her” (5): “you are in danger of your liberty, see not her face” (4). Rather than toning down his “argument” (4), Osmond urges Melcoshus to think twice before unveiling Despina, using the strongest modal auxiliary verb “must” that suggests absolute truth: “for if I draw this vaile, you then *must* yeeld, the thought of all your glories laid aside, and in her heavenly eyes read your captivity” (5). According to Osmond, the consequences of unveiling Despina are threefold: Melsoshus will have to surrender himself and by default his empery to Despina,

he will end up ignoring his military conquests, and he will become her emotional captive. Dismissing Osmond's concerns as hogwash, "Osmond, I see thou doatest thy selfe" (5), Melcoshus insists on unveiling Despina. Having warned Melcoshus in vain, Osmond responds with a prophetic pronouncement: "prepare then for a bondage which will bring delight above all freedome" (5), once again highlighting Melchosus imminent fall into "captivity" (5).

The unveiling of Despina's face marks the first dramatic turning point where gender dynamics are reversed in this play. Upon seeing Despina's face, Melcoshus cries out loud, "More, more, by all my glories, than was delivered!" Not only does he validate Osmond's pronouncements about Despina's enthralling beauty but Melcoshus gets so overwhelmed that he orders Osmond to cover her face up again: "Osmond so well I like her, cover her face lest I doe surfet with beholding" (5). Using an elaborate simile to compare Despina to the "Sun," (5) Melcoshus delivers an accolade to Despina's beauty:

... and as [the Sun's] beams in showry April breakes through the clouds, so does the lightning of her glorious eyes breake through their watery circle, and grow more powerfull by that opposition; so powerfull, that a conquering Prince descends his throne and beggs that hee may heare you, whom fortune hath made his slave, yet to command both him and fortune; for sure your tongue cannot be lesse powerfull then your eyes (5).

The topic of Melcoshus's speech seems to be Despina's eyes at first glance, but it rapidly changes from her beauty to her glory, from her glory to her power, which grows in hyperbolic intensity with each turn. The language that Melcoshus uses here is not just

hyperbolic; in fact, it turns out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy later on when his janissaries conspire to overthrow him because of his infatuation with Despina.

By succumbing to Despina “whom fortune hath made his slave” (5) and by making her “command both him and fortune” (5), Melcoshus verbally dethrones himself. The language in the simile that Melcoshus uses is revealing in predicting Melcoshus’s downfall. The choice of vehicle in a simile—the “Sun”—is not only significant but revealing. By comparing the “lightning of her glorious eyes” to the “beams” of the “Sun,” Melcoshus inadvertently opens a window of rich literary allusions. First, the “lightning of her glorious eyes” possibly alludes to Zeus, the god of lightning and the supreme ruler of the Olympians, thereby associating Despina with mythological power. The sun is traditionally gendered as male, for example, in Greek and Roman mythology, where Helios and Apollo are the sun gods, and on the early modern stage, where Hal describes his ambition to ascend into royal power as “the sun [. . .] breaking through the foul and ugly mists.”⁶ By reversing the gender norm of the vehicle vis à vis the topic in his simile, Melcoshus also inverts the gender dynamics between Despina and himself. Although Despina is literally Melcoshus’s “slave’s slave” (5), he is the one “begg[ing]” her, and she the one “command[ing]” him. The fact that Melcoshus “begs” to “hear” Despina’s voice also prefigures the verbal dexterity and bold eloquence that Despina displays in act two.

POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN MELCOSHUS AND DESPINA

By the time Despina meets up with Melcoshus in act two, she is quite the opposite of her previous self in act one. She is no longer the passive and helpless Christian maid.

In fact, as the courtship scene unfolds, not only does Despina appear bold, assertive, and defiant, but also clever and manipulative. As the old adage goes, “Be careful for what you wish you for.” This adage, ironically, could be applied to Melcoshus’s words upon their first meeting in act one. Upon their first encounter, Melcoshus “beggs that hee may heare” Despina’s voice, being “sure” that her “tongue cannot be lesse powerfull then [her] eyes” (5). In act two, Despina lives up to Melcoshus’s expectations and proves him exactly right. While in act one, the gender dynamics is inverted by both Osmond and Melcoshus, Despina herself remains silent, in act two, Despina herself takes charge of her own fate. Whatever Melcoshus says to get Despina to lie with him, Despina uses Melcoshus’s words to her own advantage to reject him. When Melcoshus entreats whether “this day [shall] be more favourable then many that are past, may he who can command all, yet hope to obtaine his suite?” Despina retorts, “Could you command all, you would command that passion in your selfe, which makes you strive to ruine my honor” (11-12). When Melcoshus tries to challenge Despina’s answer by posing a rhetorical question, “Can it be ruine to your honor, to set you on the highest point of honor, to make you the possessour and disposer of all that your imagination can propose?” (12) Despina once again refutes Melcoshus’s logic, retorting “how can this be, when I cannot dispose of my poore unworthy self” (12).

In the opening scene when the soldiers threatened to use force to “lie with her” (2), Despina’s only recourse was to call upon “Divinitie” to “assist” her. In act one, consumed with “feare” (2) by the horrific prospect of losing her “hounour” (2), Despina’s reaction is to seek self-annihilation. In act two, on the contrary, Despina practices self-reliance and falls back on her wit and eloquence to repudiate Melcoshus’s intimidating threat.

Aware of the gender role reversals and the inversion of their power dynamics, Melcoshus tries to win Despina by intimidation, alerting her to the fact that even though he “who may command, entreate, but if refus’d, the violence of [his] affection will compell [him] to use force” (12). This time, rather than feeling intimidated and helpless, Despina cleverly sets Melcoshus up as the virtuous and just emperor who is above such base and despicable acts. Using Melcoshus’s renowned reputation to her own advantage, Despina tells Melcoshus to his face that she feels confident that he “will not . . . rape” her, for she has “heard the world esteemed [him] [just]” (12). Instead of letting herself feel victimized, Despina reminds Melcoshus that recourse to violence will only result in a lose-lose situation. Not only would her “honour” be endangered but Melcoshus’s honorable reputation will be at stake as well. After engaging in a caustic repartee, Despina bluntly demands for what she wants in an imperative tone: “give me my libertie” (12). Compared with how lowly and unworthy she viewed herself in front of the soldiers, this sudden transformation in Despina’s style is quite remarkable. By act two, Despina has not only elevated her status in Melcoshus’s court but she has transformed herself from a “worthless” “slave” (2) into a quasi “divine creature” that dares “command both [Melcoshus] and fortune” (5).

After threatening to use force against Despina’s will, in an attempt to disengage from the alleged crime, Melcoshus, once again, inverts the conventional Christian-Islamic racial and gender roles: “The act will not be wholly mine; your not to be-resisted beautie first made a rape on me, inforcing me to love you” (12). In the attempt to absolve himself from the potential allegation of rape, Melcoshus puts himself in the position of the vulnerable and helpless victim that has been “rape[d]” by Despina’s forceful beauty

in the first place. By reminding Despina of his socio-political power, his royal prerogative, and his liberty to “use force,” ironically, Melcoshus ends up being victimized by his own words as he puts himself in the powerless position of a rape victim. After a long repartee, Despina clearly wins the upper hand, showing that she is the one in control. Melcoshus declares his defeat and surrenders his will to Despina: “Despina I have no facultie which is not more obedient to thy will then to my owne, each threatening word I utter’d was to my selfe a torment” (13). Instead of trying to get what he wants from her, Melcoshus decides to be patient and hopes to “find some reward” in his “temperance” (13). Much ahead of modern behavioral psychology trends, Despina cleverly reinforces the desired behavior, i.e., Melcoshus’s “temperance” (13) by “reward[ing]” him with a “kisse” (13). As a result, Melcoshus’s “blood is fir’d” up, but he promises to keep her “honor” as if he were an obedient pupil (13): “fear not, base passion shall not overthrow my wise and nobler resolutions” (14). Despite being love-struck, the Tartar emperor is able to curb his lust and make “wise and nobler resolutions” that embraces the Christian virtue of patience and temperance.

MELCOSHUS’S TEMPERANCE

While early modern culture typically represents Muslim men as licentious and intemperate, in *Osmond the great Turk*, both Melcoshus and Osmond are depicted as moral characters exhibiting Christian virtues. Like Osmond, the title character of this play, the lovesick Tartar emperor, Melcoshus, also exhibits “Christian vertues” (17) in his interactions with Despina. After Despina rewards Melcoshus with a “kisse” for being patient, Melcoshus practices self-restraint so as to not commit a “crime” against her “honor” (14, 12). Melcoshus even goes as far as refraining himself from “look[ing]” at

Despina because he fears that her “eies tho chaste may more increase [his] lust, which [his] minds pure love makes [him] now know to be a crime” (14). This new exercise in delayed gratification makes Melcoshus “languish in desire, and must do [so] ever” (17) unless Despina changes her mind. Melcoshus, the Islamic emperor who is supposed to be the embodiment of unrestrained lust according to early modern religious stereotypes, is actually adhering to the “Christian virtues [of] Faith and Temperance,” choosing to “languish in desire [for]ever” rather than “use force” (17).

For Melcoshus, courtship of Despina is very much an exercise in cultivating self-reflection, self-discipline, and delayed gratification. While Melcoshus complains to Osmond of unrequited love, his virtue of temperance is showcased. In private, Melcoshus tells Osmond, “thou hast undone me in thy rich gift.” In response to such a paradoxical statement, Osmond inquires, “How, Sir?” Melcoshus’s elaborate reply shows that instead of a rash, impetuous, lustful animal, he is very much capable of self-reflection. Although Melcoshus complains about Despina’s gloating “in her own purity” and suffers from her “disdain to mix in love with [him]” (17), he ends up learning a valuable lesson from this painful rejection. Melcoshus shows his capacity of introspective self-reflection by describing himself as a pupil in matters of love: “and yet her denyall taught me to know I was defective, my very thoughts, much more desires, did never meet a check” (17). During his difficult courtship of Despina, Melcoshus becomes aware of his unrestrained lust and his almost tyrannical exercise of unlimited power in the past, “Whose wife or daughter that I should covet, would not the husband or glad father bring me? or, if their honour mastered their love or duty, what could resist my power?” (17) As a result of Despina’s rejection, Melcoshus becomes self-conscious of his shortcomings, is aware of

being “defective,” and is willing to keep his “base passion” (14) in “check” for the first time in his life. In fact, Melcoshus has learned his Christian lesson so well that he even “hold[s] [their] Prophet Mahomet unjust, / That made no lawes against a Princes lust” (14).

JUXTAPOSITION OF A NOBLE TURK AND AN APOSTATA CHRISTIAN

While the Tartar emperor, Melcoshus, acquires Christian virtues, the Christian captive, Despina, embraces Muslim practices. Instead of being the paragon of Christian virtue, Despina embraces her new found power in Melcoshus’s court. In doing so, Despina herself reflects on her psychological transformations and finds herself to be a “weake unconstant woman” (10):

What shall I say, I finde I am a weake unconstant woman, sure I have lost my selfe, at least my grief; how pleasure and greatnesse gaines upon our natures! I who wept at first each time their eunuchs did me reverence, thinking they mockt me, now take a great delight in their observance:” (10)

Instead of lamenting her loss of freedom, Despina has acculturated herself to the new way of life in Melcoshus’s seraglio, and has even come to embrace her new elevated social status. The once powerless victim, an “Unhappy maid” (2) who “wept” whenever the eunuchs “did [her] reverence” (10), has become a driven, ambitious woman who “take[s] great delight in their observance” (10). Despina openly admits what early modern Europeans feared the most—the dissolution of their Christian identity: “sure I have lost my selfe” (10) under the temptations of “pleasure and greatnesse” (10).

While early modern England was eager to access the trade routes controlled by the Ottoman Empire and to take advantage of the commercial opportunities provided by the expanding global market, the economy of piracy and slavery in the Mediterranean region exacerbated English anxieties about cultural pollution, miscegenation, and religious conversion⁷. Benedict Scott Robinson argues that the experience of the foreign or the strange can evoke positive feelings, such as “wonder” and “eroticized longing,” but it could also “prompt anxiety, and a fear of loss or dissolution of the self.” (119)⁸ while Jonathan Burton argues that the threat of “turning Turk” is “arguably the most disturbing aspect of Anglo-Islamic relations” (Burton 52).⁹ In a sermon delivered on the reconversion of a renegade in 1627, Henry Byam laments the instability of religious identities in the Levant: “many, and as I am informed, many hundreds, are Musselmans in Turkie, and Christians at home, doffing their religion, as they doe their clothes, and keeping a conscience for every Harbor.”¹⁰ Byam repeatedly warn his audience against the “baites and allurements,” the “enticements of pleasure, and worldly preferment” that seduce Christians to “turn Turk” and urged Englishmen abroad to suffer martyrdom rather than conversion for it is “better to die than to turn Turk.”¹¹ In sermons, travelogues, and captivity narratives, it is usually Christian men who face the temptation of going native, or “turning Turk.” The textual emphasis on the male makes sense insofar as few early modern English women travelled to Muslim territory. In the imaginative world of early modern drama, however, the threat of turning Turk applies to women as well as men. In Phillip Massinger’s *The Renegado*, the Christian maid, Paulina, held captive by the Tunisian Asambeg, stages a fake conversion into Islam only to help the European crew escape from the Islamic jurisdiction of Tunis. In *Osmond*, the Christian captive,

Despina, who is in the same shoes as Paulina, chooses to make the best of her situation instead by “join[ing] a religious civilization of power [and] assum[ing] that power” for herself.¹²

Once Despina has assumed power, she proves to be a Machiavellian and shrewd woman who dares to pursue what she wants. Exerting her new-found power, Despina sends for Osmond, breaking the rules of the seraglio as “sildome hath been permitted by the great Cham that any [man] should enter [t]here” (10). When asked by Despina, “sent you for Osmond?” (10) the Eunuch replies, “He waits without to know your pleasure [. . .] he intends not to denie you any thing” (10). Not only is Despina revered by the eunuchs, but she is now in the position to give orders and to command Osmond’s will. Despina and Osmond are put in sharp juxtaposition in this tête-à-tête scene. When Osmond is brought in to see Despina, he greets her with utmost humility, “Thus low as to my Princes Mistress! what was it you intended?” (10) In return, Despina tries to seduce Osmond, offering her “lips” for Osmond to “kiss” (10). Although Despina claims that “a modest kiss” (11) between the two of them would not “impaire” (11) her “honour” (11) Osmond fears for his life: “Should I have kist you and been seen, death was my sure reward” (11). In contrast to Despina’s loose behavior, Osmond shows his steadfast loyalty to Melcochus. For Osmond, “death” is the just reward for being a “traitor to [his] selfe and virtue in [his] disloyaltie unto [his] prince” (11). Despina tries to appear as a demure virgin by playing the innocent card, “thinke it no immodesty in me but ignorance of your strict customes” (11) and insists that “a salutation amongst Christians breeds no suspicion of ill” (11) attributing her perceived boldness to cultural differences in Christian and

Islamic customs. Osmond inquires about Christian customs, and yields in so far as to kiss her “hand” (11) yet still feels that “in this too farre doe stretch [his] dutie” (11).

Growing even bolder after initial greetings, Despina tries to seduce Osmond, who considers running off with her as high “treason” (16). Despina expresses her romantic interest in Osmond openly: “even in midst of all my griefs your merits found a passage to my heart” (11). Then she challenges Osmond to take up her offer to become a Christian in exchange for her love:

and tho I shall be able to command Melchous, and in him the world, yet if you dare applie your courage to the performance of what I shall offer, and that effected become a Christian, I shall thinke my selfe happy, to be againe wholly at your disposing, as I was when you did unkindly to your selfe and mee, bestow me on another. (11)

She fully understands the power she exerts on Melcoshus and uses it to her own advantage. By boasting of her socio-political power to command “the world,” (11) Despina tries to make her romantic offer to Osmond even more appealing. Despina astutely sets the terms and conditions of her offer in black and white and she even goes as far as blaming Osmond for giving her away to Melcoshus in the first place.

Osmond, the virtuous Turk—reversal of Christian Islamic gender roles

The seduction scene is interrupted by Melcoshus’s sudden arrival. Osmond muses upon what has happened and concludes that “it was happy fate, that brought the Emperor so to crosse [his] yielding,” (16) temporarily at least. Osmond admits that if it were not for Melcoshus’s interruption, he would not have been able to “resist such a motion,

coming from her that [he] adore[s]" (16). In a monologue vaguely reminiscent of Hamlet's "To be, or not to be," Osmond delivers his own version of "To marry, or not to marry," carefully weighing the advantages and the risks of accepting Despina's offer: "Let me consider, become a Christian, flie, and marry me: What a temptation's this?" (16)

In early modern England, a "temptation" is defined as "the action of tempting or . . . being tempted . . . to evil; enticement, allurements" (OED), but it also means "the action or process of testing or proving," which is akin to "trial, [and] test" (OED).¹³ In sermons, polemical tracts, and Turk plays, interracial romantic proposals are considered "temptations" when the offering party is Turk or Islamic.¹⁴ More often than not, it is Christian men that face "temptations" from Islamic women to turn Turk. In Osmond, however, the opposite is true. The second semantic layer of "temptation," in the sense of "the action or process of testing or proving," further puts Osmond in the position of the virtuous man who has to suffer trials and overcome temptations in order to strengthen his faith and character. This is one of the rare occasions when an Islamic Turk is presented in a completely positive light at the expense of an European Christian in early modern English drama.

Despite all the compliments to Despina's beauty, Osmond sees Despina as the embodiment of evil forces that threatens to lure him into destruction: "Hence thou enticing charme, whose witchcraft almost does enforce me, to forsake my faith and virtue" (16). The terms "charm" and "witchcraft" carry negative connotations. Although "charm" has the figurative meaning of "any quality, attribute, trait, feature, which exerts a fascinating or attractive influence, exciting love or admiration" and could refer to "female beauty" or "great personal attractions," (OED)¹⁵ its original meaning was more

sinister. “Charm” could also signify anything that “possesses magic power or occult influence” (OED). In close collocation with the word “witchcraft,”¹⁶ “charm” brings up negative associations, such as sorcery, magic, spell, witchery, necromancy, and the supernatural power to “act upon with a charm or magic, so as to influence, control, subdue, bind; to put a spell upon; to bewitch, enchant” (OED).¹⁷ In Osmond’s eyes, Despina, the Christian captive, has virtually turned into a sinister witch who has supernatural mind-controlling power.

MELCOSHUS’S TRANSFORMATION

Despina is not the only character who changes during the play. Although Melcoshus embraces Christian virtues of faith and temperance during his courtship of Despina, he undergoes a drastic transformation after he becomes Despina’s “captive” (23). Odmer, Melcoshus’s loyal councilor, notices how his sovereign has changed ever since Despina has “enslaved” him: “I have not seen him looke like himself since he forsook Mars to become the slave of Venus” (50). Melcoshus’s son, Orcane also testifies to his altered status: “I do protest, my Father’s errour doth so much lessen him from what he was” (29). While Despina comments on her loss of “self” (10) after residing at the Muslim court, Melcoshus expresses a similar sentiment of being “transport[ed] . . . from [his] selfe” (17) after Despina consents to “give herself “freely” to him (17). Even before Despina consents to “mix in love with [him]” (17), Melcoshus imagines the extreme sexual pleasure he will enjoy when she does. Melcoshus believes that when Despina gives her kisses “freely” (17), the pleasure he enjoys will “transport [him] from [his] selfe” (17); in fact, “the meer imagination does almost perform it” (17). Although Melcoshus is mainly referring to losing himself in extreme sensual pleasure, ironically, it

also foreshadows the loss of his former self in his deterioration in judgment. To Melcoshus, Despina wields an enormous transformative power, for “she may advance [him] to a happinesse, above all earthly Monarchs” just “by one smile” (17). In other words, for Melcoshus, the value and power of Despina’s “smile” surpasses the glory of “all earthly Monarchs” foreshadowing the abdication of his regal duties later on (17). Although the statement sounds hyperbolic, everyone in Melcoshus’s court attests to the utter and complete transformation he goes through after Despina requites his love. In fact, later on Melcoshus is accused of “selling [his] honour and the kingdoms safety for a few wanton kisses” (38-9). Although he does not realize it yet, being “transport[ed] . . . from [his] selfe” proves to be disastrous for Melcoshus.

Melcoshus’s sudden transformation entails the dissolution of his kingly virtues and identity. Everyone in Melcoshus’s court, except Osmond, criticizes Melcoshus’s altered behavior after Despina consents to “mix in love with [him]” (17). Haly, whom Melcoshus deems his “most trusted counsellour” (27), comments on Melcoshus’s lack of governance: “you see the Emperour throwes by all care of Subjects, addicting himself wholly to pleasure” (23). Haly not only criticizes Melcoshus’s negligence of government, ignoring his subjects, but also depicts his emperor as an addict devoid of self-discipline and self-control, “addict[ed] . . . to pleasure” (23). Though Haly “hath abused [Melcoshus’s] trust” (27) trying to instigate rebellion while his emperor “hath bin fast lull’d asleep with pleasure” (27), what he observes in Melcoshus is seconded by everyone else in the court. Case in point, Callibeus’ appeal for justice is refuted and ignored. To Callibeus’s utter frustration, Melcoshus fails to deliver a just abdication in the case of his wife’s alleged rape.¹⁸ Melcoshus even goes as far as suggesting that “twas disobedience,

either in her, or [Callibeus], that did not offer” voluntarily what his son, Orcanes, “was pleas’d to like” (34), i.e., Callibeus’s wife. In response to Callibeus’s appeal, Melcoshus tells him “be gone, and hold thy self happie, that I do not inflict a punishment upon thee” for his “present troubling” (34). Having no other recourse than the supernatural, Callibeus cannot help but wonder: “You Gods! Is this Melcoshus justice, for which he hath bin so renowned?” (39) only to answer himself with resignation, “but his fond love hath ruin’d all his virtue (39). In short, after becoming “enslaved” by his Christian captive, Melsochus becomes a stereotypical Oriental tyrant. Interestingly, Odmer absolves Melcoshus of being a tyrant by ascribing that title of tyrant to love: “but would that tyrant, Love, release him, that he might shew himself aigane in armes” (27).

Amid all the criticism that Melsochus’ negligence and incompetence draws from his subjects, Despina is regarded as the main source of Melcoshus’s corruption. More than once, Despina is described in xenophobic and derogatory terms in the Tartar court. A captain in Melcoshus’s camp remarks, “‘tis strange, our Emperour should thus doat upon a captive, a Christian too” (23). From the captain’s perspective, it is disconcerting enough that Melcoshus dotes upon “a captive” but for his emperor to dote upon “a Christian” is even more unimaginable. Just as the racial and religious categories of “Turks” and “Catholics” were used as derogatory terms, “Christians” were also used as derogatory epithets in Turkish culture. Remarking on his “Father’s errour” in mixing up with Despina, Orcane also lashes out a misogynistic diatribe, “I’le forswear the very company of women; bewitching Syrens, that confounds our judgments” (29). Although the diatribe seems like a sweeping generalization targeted toward all women, it also shows the intensity of the misogynistic sentiment that Despina has inflamed in the

Muslim prince's mind. When it comes to romantic compatibility, not only is Despina considered beneath the dignity of Tartar royalty, but she is also targeted as the source of political corruption. Haly, another of Melcoshus's councilors, blames Despina for Melcoshus's negligence of his duties: "the Emperour throwes by all care of Subjects, addicting himself wholly to pleasure; daies, weeks, and months he spends with Despina, that painted Sorceresse" (23). Juxtaposing "Subjects" and "Despina" in the same sentence, Haly ostracizes Despina by making a contrast between Melcoshus's Turkish subjects and the Christian enchantress. By virtue of the syntactical structure—a reverse cause and effect structure—Haly demonizes Despina and identifies her as the direct source of political instability. By labeling Despina "that painted Sorceresse" (20) Haly also implies that she is the one that robbed Melcoshus of his rational faculty, reinforcing the idea that Despina is the source of their political crisis.

Even though Despina is ostracized as a Christian, demonized as a Syren, and blamed as the source of Melcoshus's corruption, ultimately, Melcoshus is the one that has to pay the price of neglecting "his office" (22). Though Haly "speake[s] of virtue . . . and seeme[s] to showe [his] love" (20), he is the one who is "sheltred under a pretence of love to [his] countrie" (20) and instigates rebellion against the infatuated Melcoshus. While others criticize Melcoshus's negligence and corruption of government for their country's sake, Haly does so with a self-seeking "design" (19) in order to overthrow Melcoshus and seize power. He justifies mass rebellion by showing how Melcoshus has grown completely oblivious and incompetent even in dire times of political and military crisis. According to Haly, not only does Melcoshus spend too much time dallying with Despina in times of peace but even "when he heares of any revolted Province, or of preparing

enemies,” the only thing he cares about is “how fair Despina slept that night, affirming, that in her alone, was losse or victory” (20). Haly also deplores Melcoshus for “wish[ing] that all his subjects love were turned to hate, so that his goddesses would but favor him” (20) although he might secretly rejoice for his own sake. As Haly enumerates all of the reasons that show how Melcoshus is unfit to rule anymore, another captain, one of Haly’s minions, denounces Melcoshus’s kingship based on the merit principle. The captain is a religious subscriber of the merit principle and argues that it would actually be wrong to continue supporting Melcoshus when he has “fallen into vice and imbecility” (20) because it was “his vertues [that] made him Emperour” in the first place. Now that his virtues are “being counterfeit” the army would be guilty of “forsak[ing] virtue” (20) if they continue to “be firm to him that’s fallen into vice and imbecility” (20). Melcoshus’s negligence of his duties coupled with Haly’s instigation and scheming plot result in a political crisis where “all the Souldiers that have any spirit . . . talke of electing them another Emperour” (22). Haly and his recruits may very well speak ill of Melcoshus in order to incite “mutinie” (38) but even Odmer, who would sacrifice his life to fulfill “a faithfull Subjects part” (37) observes that Melcoshus “undermine [him]selfe and [his soldiers] in [his] ill government” (38). As a result, Melcoshus’s soldiers “turne likewise traitors to themselves and to [him], swearing a captive shall not governe them” (38). What’s more, this is not only “the common Soldier’s saying” but “even the greatest Captaines hold this resolution” against Melcoshus.

In the end, it is Odmer who saves the day. Risking the rage of Melcoshus, Odmer “make[s] known . . . unto his Sovereigne how he dayly loses his Souldiers love” (23) by “rip[ping] up [his] faults before [his] face”. What is interesting is that in the process of

“rip[ping] up [Melcoshus’s] faults, Odmer conjures up vivid images of death, disease, and captivity to show him how far he has fallen from his previous glory. When Odmer goes to see Melcoshus, first he makes his best intentions known: “Did not my love unto your sacred selfe make me preferr dutie before danger, I should as others do in silence . . . mourn, the ruines of your state and murderd honor” (36). Still, Odmer has braced himself up for the worst possible outcome. Although Odmer is prepared to “become a zealous priest and sacrifice [him]selfe to shew [Melcoshus] danger” (36), he makes Melcoshus promise to “heare [him] out” before “draw[ing] his sword” because Odmer knows he will “move [him] highly; the sore [he] come[s] to launch is too much festerd to be cur’d with flatterie” (37). In addition to images of violent death, Odmer also conjures up images of disease to justify the commotion and irritation that his blunt approach might incur. The metaphor of a “festered sore” about the theory of the body politic is common in early modern literature. The analogy is between the microcosmic physical structure of the individual and the macrocosmic political structure of the kingdom. According to this theory, when the king, the appointed “head” of a kingdom, has a “festered sore,” the infection will soon spread over to the whole body politic, i.e., the entire state he governs.¹⁹

Odmer also reminds Melcoshus of the former glories he enjoyed when “neighbor Princes fear’d [him] as does the lesser hawke the Kingly Eagle” (37) and provides a stark contrast to his current fallen state: Now that “the spirit of great Melcoshus” is “strangled by sloath and wantonness” (39) “each Prince seemes to scorn you and your power, knowing your noble faculties are asleep nay murder’d by your lustfull passion” (37). Apart from images of violence and death, Odmer also uses the trope of captivity to exhort

Melcoshus: “I should not neede to let you see the perill and dishonor that attends your too much Love (I dare not call it dotage) on Despina, if your owne judgment were at libertie that better could inform you” (37). Odmer implies had Melcoshus not been “enslaved” by his love for Despina, he would be free to judge for himself, but since that is not the case, Odmer has to risk writing “a faithfull warning . . . in his bloody intralls” in order for Melcoshus to gain liberty. In the end, Odmer resorts to humiliation and admonition, “If not for shame yet for the dangers sake bethink your selfe” (38). In what Odmer depicts as a communal religious effort, he urges Melcoshus to do his part in shaking free from his disgraceful captivity: “struggle a little for your liberty; our Prayers shall untwist your bands; and, once free, your vertues soon will shine again” (38).

MELCOSHUS’S REFORMATION

After taking in Odmer’s earnest exhortation, Melcoshus makes an example of his “degenerate Son Orcanes,” to show he is still a “Commander” (40) that embodies “valour, vigilance, and justice” (40). Determined to “tread those vertuous paths again that did advance” him to sovereignty in the first place, Melcoshus decides to show “no partiality” to him whom “next to Despina, [is] the comfort of [his] life” (40). Even though he may risk being “falsely brand[ed] . . . with the name of cruell and unnaturall” (40), Melcoshus condemns Orcanes for his “brutish violence” (41) in “ravish[ing]” (42) Callibeus’s wife. In response to Orcanes’ appeal for mercy based on their kinship—“O Sir, Remember who I am” (42)—Melcoshus responds:

Whilst thou wast what thou oughtst to be thou needst not bid me to remember that thou wert my son, but since thou art become a stranger to that noblesse that should

accompany thy birth, like a corrupted branch Ile cut thee from the stock, lest I for my injustice by the justice of the heavens should perish with thee. (42)

In essence, Melcochus rejects Orcanes's appeal by disowning him for failing to live up to his royal lineage. Because of his moral degeneration, Orcanes has become a "like a corrupted branch" that has to be cut off for the self-preservation of the royal "stock" (42). Melcochus's original sentence was to blind Orcanes, but when he thought Orcanes lied about Ozaca's consent in order to save his eyesight, he "repent[s] [his] pittie" (43) and condemns his son to death for not only "defil[ing] her person" but for "murther[ing] her, and her husband . . . alive" (44).²⁰

The sorrowful fate of Despina comes not so much as a surprise as an inevitable outcome given the internal logic of the play and the momentum of the plot. After cleansing his kingdom of Orcanes' "villainies" (43) for fear that his corruption would "infect the world with basenesse yet unheard of" (44), Melcochus engages in another radical act to show he is the one in command. Melcochus prefaces his second act of "cutting-off" intimate members by acknowledging all the criticism he has incurred, "I hear that . . . some have gone so far as to affirme, I have given ore to be a King, making my selfe my captives slave, and so deserve no longer to beare Rule (45) and by calling upon "all the Captains" (44) assembled there to be his "witness" to the "horrid spectacle" (46, 48). In order to protect the integrity of his kingship and the safety of the Tartar kingdom, the foreign threat that threatens to tear everything apart has to be surgically removed. Despina, who boasts of having "all the empire subject to [her] will" by virtue of her "command ore [Melcochus]" (35) is cited across the board as the main cause of the army's "mutinie" (36). Melcochus's emasculated, effeminate condition finally leads to an

aggressive assertion of mastery and ownership of his sovereignty: “To make you know . . . that I value the good of you my subjects and my honour far above fading pleasures, be this my witness thus I cut from my selfe such a content, that Mortals nere enjoy’d. (46).

The “horrid” scene of slaying Despina almost functions as a sacrificial rite. While Odmer warns Melcoshus that his soldiers “turne likewise traitors to themselves and to [him], swearing a captive shall not governe them” (38), the ambiguity of his language is revealing. The ambiguity in the subject of the subordinate clause, “swearing a captive shall not governe them” (38), points to a confusion of identity between Melcoshus and Despina. The term “captive” should literally refer to Despina, the Christian captive, but the logical structure of its ensuing sentence, “they must have one to lead them forth to war” (38) suggests that “captive” is the grammatical equivalent to “one” (38), which points to Melcoshus as the linguistic reference since he is the official leader of the kingdom. This lexical ambiguity seems to suggest that by mixing in love with Despina and relegating his kingly authority to her, Melcoshus’s identity is mixed up with Despina’s. It is precisely because of this confusion and crisis of identity that Melcoshus ends up asserting his kingly self in an act of violent aggression lest his army rise up and direct the violence against him.

In the end, Despina dies neither as a victim of Turkish treachery, nor as an immaculate Christian martyr. She is cut off precisely because of her assumption of too much power in Melcoshus’s court. Her decapitation is highly symbolic. As antagonism rises in Melcoshus’s court and his subjects grow more and more disgruntled, the threat of uprising is on the verge of eruption. Commenting on the early modern political landscape,

D. G. Hale notes, a “sovereign who did not subject him- or herself to natural law could be rightfully deposed” and some even went so far as insisting that “a diseased state could cure itself by means of political decapitation.”²¹ As the natural law that governed sovereign-subject power relations was questioned and destabilized, Haly and his followers are ready to overthrow Melcoshus, whom they consider the diseased head of the Turkish body politic. Despina’s decapitation is in effect, the decapitation of a diseased version of the head of the Turkish body politic. *In order to fulfill and hold up to his end of the bargain in a politics of reciprocity characterized by mutual obligations*, Melcoshus has to make an aggressive assertion of mastery *to continue exercising his sovereignty*. Despite her initial status of a lowly prisoner, Despina rises in power in the Muslim court as a result of her apostasy. Although Despina tries to seduce Osmond into converting into Christianity and escaping with her, she becomes an “apostata” after failing to entice Osmond to marry her. *She* switches her role from a passive, submissive outsider to a shrewd, opportunist insider, only to revert once again to the position of an outsider, subject to sacrificial exclusion.

Notes

¹ Hereafter referred to as *Osmond*.

² For previous studies of *Osmond the Great Turk*, see Friederike Hahn, "One *Osmond the Great Turk*, Not Two," *Notes and Queries* 54.1 (2007): 35-36, Friederike Hahn, "A Compositorial Error in Lodowick Carlell's *Osmond the Great Turk*," *Notes and Queries* 56.2 (2009): 207-209, and Mark Hutchings, "The Stage Historicizes the Turk: Convention and Contradiction in the Turkish History Play," *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms Outside the Canon* ed. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 158-178.

³ The story of the Sultan (Mahomet II) and Irene, the Christian slave, was dramatized on the English stage in at least four different versions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The story, which originated in Bandello's *La Prima Parte de le Novelle del Bandello* (1554), was a popular one, and it first appeared in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1556) and later on in Richard Knolle's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603). It was also staged in a lost play by George Peele, *The Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the Fair Greek* (1594), in Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turke, or Amurath the First* (1627), in Gilbert Swinhoe's *The Tragedy of the Unhappy Fair Irene* (1658), and in *Irena, a Tragedy* (1664) of unknown authorship.

⁴ Sultan Mahomet II.

⁵ Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's the Virgin Martir and the Early Modern Threat of "Turning Turk"" *ELH* 73.1 (Spring 2006): 83-117.

⁶ *Henry IV, Part I* 1.2.220, 225. Here, the word “sun” is also a pun on “son,” the royal heir.

⁷ Vitkus, 37.

⁸ Benedict Scott Robinson, “Strange Commodities,” *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 129.

⁹ Jonathan Burton, “English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on ‘Turning Turk’ in Early Modern Texts,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.1 (2002): 35-67.

¹⁰ Henry Byam and Edward Kellet, *A Retvrne form Argier. A sermon preached at minhead in the county of somerset the 16 of march* (London, 1628) 74.

¹¹ Byam, 75.

¹² “Converts chose Islam because they wanted to join a religious civilization of power; and once they joined it, they assumed that power and prospered” (Matar, 37). Also see Vitkus, *Turning* 153.

¹³ 1535 *Bible* (Coverdale) Eccus. xxvii. 5 The ouen proueth the potters vessell, so doth tentacion of trouble trye righteous men; 1552 ABP. J. HAMILTON *Catech.* Tabil sig. *viiij^v/2, Thair is temptatioun quhairby man temptis God; 1677 R. GILPIN *Dæmonol. Sacra* I. ix. 71 Temptations are distinguished into Tryals meerly, and Seducements.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/198975?redirectedFrom=temptation#>

¹⁴ Vitkus, 108.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/30762?rskey=vngxXTW&result=1&isAdvanced=false#>

¹⁶ Witchcraft: The practices of a witch or witches; the exercise of supernatural power supposed to be possessed by persons in league with the devil or evil spirits.

fig. Power or influence like that of a magician; bewitching or fascinating attraction or charm.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/view/Entry/229580?redirectedFrom=witchcraft#>

¹⁷ On the surface, to “enforce” means to “drive by physical, mental or moral force: To drive a person *to* or *from* a belief, sentiment, or course of action” (OED), but it also means to “overcome by violence; to take (a town) by storm; to force, ravish (a woman)” (OED).

¹⁸ Although Callibeus’s wife and Orcanes had consensual sex, they had agreed to deceive Callibeus so that he would not blame her for adultery.

¹⁹ See Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) and Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues, and Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). For a discussion of the body natural and the body politic, Theodora A. Jankowski, “The Body Natural and the Body Politic: Early Modern Political Theory and the Anomaly of Woman Ruler,” *The Women in Power in the Early Modern Drama* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 54-77, L. Barkan, *Nature’s Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), and David George Hale, *The Body Politic: A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature* (Hague: Mouton, 1971).

²⁰ Of course, the dramatic irony is that Melcoshus’s strict adherence to “Justice” (44) based on the presumption that his son “wouldst infect the world with basenesse yet unheard of” (44) is actually injustice because Orcanes is “strangle[d]” for telling the truth too late.

²¹ D. G. Hale, *The Body Politic: A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature* (Hague: Mouton, 1971) 81. Hale argues that “A crisis of obligation was beginning to blossom where relations of authority—especially between sovereign and subject—were no longer seen to be self-evident or grounded in the laws of nature” (8).

CHAPTER FOUR

Polemical Tropes of Captivity and Interracial Romance in

Phillip Massinger's *The Renegado*¹

Phillip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1623) opens at a bazaar in Tunis. Vitelli, the Venetian aristocrat in disguise, has come to Tunis to redeem his virtuous sister, Paulina, who has been kidnapped by a renegade pirate and sold into captivity to Asambeg, the lustful Ottoman viceroy. It is Paulina's captivity narrative that sets the whole play in action. In the early modern imagination, Paulina's physical captivity in Tunis would have automatically invited qualms about succumbing to the allure of Islam, which was considered an even more horrific form of captivity. In the opening scenes, Vitelli bursts into a hysteric tirade in fear of Paulina's fate, "Can I know my sister / Mewed up in his seraglio and in danger / Not alone to lose her honor, but her soul [and still] be patient?" (I.1.128-30, 33).² In early modern Protestant propaganda, physical and spiritual captivity by the Turks was often conflated with anti-papist discourse, couched in terms of a crusade against "the second Turk" or "the Eastern whore of Babylon."³ While the connection between Pope and Turk is recognized as "a commonplace feature of Protestant historiography", the role and function of Catholicism in *The Renegado* has been largely ignored.⁴ Critics who did address the issue of religion have collapsed the distinction between Protestants and Catholics, grouping them together as "Christian comrades" in opposition to the Islamic Turks, overlooking the complexities and ambiguities of identity politics in the play.⁵

Contrary to this binary view of Christian-Islamic relations, I argue that both topical and textual tropes of captivity problematize Anglo-Islamic relations in *The Renegado*. As Claire Jowitt notes, “the Italians act as surrogate English” in *The Renegado*; as a result, Anglo-Islamic relations in the play are dramatized through the cultural encounters between the Catholic Venetians and the Islamic Turks.⁶ Although religious encounters in early modern drama have been mostly analyzed as erotic temptations—i.e. religion is sexualized—in the Donusa-Vitelli case, erotic encounters are expressed through a religious vocabulary heavily loaded with anti-papist tropes of captivity—i.e. sex is “religiousized” or “polemicized.” As polemical tropes of captivity conflate Catholics and Turks in the play, the English are implicated in their Catholic surrogates, blurring Anglo-Islamic self-other distinctions. In the parallel courtship plots of Vitelli and Donusa, Asambeg and Paulina, Anglo-Islamic gender and religious identities are constantly renegotiated through tropes of captivity.

As the English Protestants were busy defining themselves against continental Catholics as the elect, early modern representations of the Islamic other also “helped to construct an identity for Protestant England when English identity was developing into a proto-imperialist formation.”⁷ Early modern personal and national identities were no longer “constructed only from within the local, the familiar, and the traditional, but increasingly became inseparably connected to the global, the strange, and the alien.”⁸ Analyzing early modern travel narratives, Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh conclude that Anglo-Islamic encounters does not produce Said’s Orientalism, but instead report “cultural encounters in which self and other are not fixed in opposing positions but are rewritten through discursive and social interventions.”⁹ In *The Renegado*, the erotic

encounters between Vitelli and Donusa, Asambeg and Paulina, play out the problematic triangulation of Anglo-Catholic-Islamic identity politics.

In light of *The Renegado*'s happy resolution, Vitelli is usually read as the triumphant and virtuous pan-Christian hero: after all, he ventures into Tunis to save his sister Paulina, resists the temptation of turning Turk, converts the pagan princess, and runs off happily with the Tunisian "choicest jewels . . . safe aboard" (V.8.27).¹⁰ Linking the language of economic treasures to male sexual organs, Jonathan Harris makes a case for Vitelli's "testicular integrity" at the end of the play.¹¹ If Vitelli does achieve sexual and religious integrity in the end, he is by no means presented in such a heroic light in the beginning.

Vitelli, the supposedly messianic figure that has come to Tunis to redeem Paulina from Turkish captivity, is associated with Turkish effeminacy in act one scene one. Upon meeting father Francisco, his Jesuit mentor, Vitelli is rebuked for his effeminacy: "You give too much to Fortune and your passions" (I.1.70); "Will you . . . bear your constancy's trial, / Not like Vitelli, but *a village nurse*, / With *curses in your mouth*, *tears in your eyes*? How poorly it shows in you!" (I.1.80, 83-86).¹² Vitelli is effeminized through his alignment to the emotional realm, bearing all the early modern hallmarks of "essential womanhood": excessive emotions, inconstancy, and shrewishness. Not willing to accept Francisco's criticism, Vitelli blames his bouts of "passions" on the account of being "a sinful man" like the rest of humanity (I.1.70, 75). Francisco deflects his excuse by answering, "I exact not from you / A fortitude insensible of calamity . . . all that I challenge / Is *manly* patience" (I.1.76-9). Vitelli is not effeminized as a result of Turkish contamination as early modern English conventions would have it; rather, his culpability is highlighted by the syntax of the dialogue: Francisco's chastisement places emphasis on

the personal pronoun “you”, with every utterance of “you” at a poetic caesura while the repetition of the possessive “your” reinforces his responsibility. Although Vitelli replies, “I am schooled sir, / And will hereafter, to my utmost strength, / Study to be *myself*” (I.1.86-88), thereby trying to distance these effeminate qualities from his supposedly “true” self, he continues to be impetuous throughout the scene until Francisco admonishes him again: “Do but give me hearing, / And you shall soon grant how ridiculous / This *childish fury* is” (I.1.140-43). Constant in his womanish effeminacy, Vitelli is not only excluded from the masculine sphere, but also relegated to the realm of the emotional, the nonsensical, and the childish.

Although Vitelli is a Venetian gentleman by birth, he is seen throughout the play as a disguised foreign merchant under the jurisdiction of Islamic law, “a poor mechanic peddler,” (III.4.80) as Mustapha calls him. By contrast, Donusa, the “sultan’s niece”, by virtue of her kinship with “His sacred majesty”—the “mightiest Amurath”—is set up as a woman holding immense power (I.3.169; I.2.84, 67). The regal power that Donusa enjoys can be glimpsed through the homage that Mustapha, “the basha of Aleppo”, pays to her in their first encounter (I.1.98). Before Mustapha enters Donusa’s room, he “puts off his yellow pantofles” as a token of respect, as if “[her] place is sacred” (I.2.59). Then, Mustapha kneels down before Donusa’s presence with the “devotion / [that] pilgrims pay at Mecca when they visit / The tomb of [their] great prophet” (I.2.60-62). The sanctity of Donusa’s status is further reinforced by Mustapha’s reference to her as the “divinest lady” (I.2.71). Throughout her interview with Mustapha, Donusa reminds him of her royal prerogatives. When presented with a letter “signed by [Amurath’s] hand” (I.2.72) that designates Mustapha as her future husband, Donusa exerts her power by adding an

addendum: “provided . . . that I / Affect and like your person” (I.2.90-92). Donusa rejects “the ceremony which [Amurath] uses in / Bestowing of his daughters and nieces” at his will and interprets the letter on her own terms: “[Amurath] should present you for my *slave*, / To love you if you pleased me; or deliver / A poniard. On my least dislike, to kill you” (I.2.95-97). Instead of serving as a token of exchange between male alliances, Donusa exerts the right to choose her own husband and claims the power of life and death over the “stout Mustapha” (I.1.97).¹³

In their very first encounter, Donusa has the upper hand as Vitelli pays homage to her beauty. When Donusa unveils herself at the bazaar, Vitelli exclaims, “What wonder look I on!” anticipating his “making religion of wonder” from Donusa’s beauty (I.3.141).¹⁴ Far from being denigrated, Donusa is described as the goddess of chastity: “Cynthia in full glory, waited on / By the fairest of the stars” (II.1.14-15). Before their second encounter, Donusa’s aura of authority is reinforced by associating her name with a quasi-magical quality. When Vitelli ventures into the palace, he has to utter the magical word, “Donusa”, to save his own life: “Stand—the word. / Or, being a Christian, to press thus far / Forfeits thy life” (II.4.10-12). Vitelli is impressed with the power that Donusa wields in the strictly hierarchical Ottoman court: “What a privilege her name bears! ‘Tis wondrous strange!” (II.4.13)

Although Donusa is often read by critics as the lustful “Oriental temptress”, she constantly reconfigures her own identity and subverts the normative cultural and gender expectations (IV.3.56).¹⁵ While early modern Europeans considered the Ottomans as lustful by “nature”, Donusa sees her amorous desires as the result of having undergone some “unnatural” transformation: “What magic hath *transformed me from myself*? /

Where is my virgin pride? How have I lost / My boasted *freedom*” (II.1.23-25). Using a lexicon of transformation, Donusa configures herself as a “virtuous” maid who has been “colonized” by previously unknown desires, with the word “unknown” hinting at her virginal status: “What new fire burns up / My scorched entrails? What *unknown* desires / *Invade and take possession of my soul*” (II.1.26-28). Moreover, she reverses the normative gender ideology of reading women as enchanting sirens, portraying herself sailing “[her] bark of chastity . . . Into the gulf of . . . ill fame”, and reconfigures Vitelli as the siren who lures her into her new “fall[en]” state: “I [have] stood / The shock of fierce *temptations*, stopped mine ears / Against all *siren* notes’ lust ever sung” (II.1.31, 33, 28-34). Finally, she turns the classical allusion to women as Medusas upside down and empowers herself with a biblical allusion to Christ’s healing power: “nor are / My looks like to the Gorgon’s head that turn / Men into statues; rather they have power / To give to dead men motion” (II.4.19-24).¹⁶

Not only does Donusa reverse the normative gender ideology but also confound the conventional Anglo-Islamic religious perspectives. Contrary to what is expected from an early modern English political perspective—the Islamic other as the cruel tyrant—Donusa uses the language of religious devotion—specifically, tropes of captivity in Protestant polemics—to speak of her sexual desires, drawing the audience’s attention to Vitelli’s Catholicism and the religious values he embraces as a form of spiritual captivity. On the one hand, Donusa positions herself as one who subjugates herself to Vitelli, “I obey thee, / Imperious god of love, and willingly / Put mine own *fetters* on to grace thy triumph” (II.1.38-40). On the other hand, Donusa draws attention to Vitelli as a tyrant, “‘Twere, therefore, more than *cruelty* in thee / To use me like a *tyranne*” (II.1.41-42).

Although Donusa is literally referring to the god of love, Vitelli is implicated through metonymic association as she elaborates profusely on her enthrallment by a Catholic. While Ottoman rulers are the figures traditionally seen as “cruel tyrants,” Donusa reverses the norm by assigning the label to Vitelli. As she laments “till I betrayed my *liberty*, / One gracious look of mine would have erected / An *altar* to my *service*”, the allusion to her fall into captivity underscores her status as a victim of Catholic enthrallment while the simultaneous reference to herself as an idol highlight her links to Catholicism in the Protestant imagination (II.1.44-46). As the popular notion of Ottoman despotism is transferred to Vitelli through the theological association of tyranny with Catholicism, the double-reversal of religious identities confounds the audience’s sympathy and perspectives.

The constant renegotiation of gender and religious identities in *The Renegado* reflects the “frighteningly unstable character” of political and religious identities in the early modern Mediterranean littoral.¹⁷ It was common for early modern Reformation polemicists to employ the political tropes of freedom and captivity, liberty and tyranny, to express their anti-Catholic sentiments. Protestants were fond of mapping contemporary history onto Israelite biblical history, reconfiguring belief in Catholicism as “Babylonian captivity.” By the same token, Protestants often conflated the physical and spiritual captivity by the Turks with the religious bondage of Catholicism and referred to both in captivity metaphors. Both the captivity tropes within the play and those circulating in early modern polemical discourses associate Turkishness with Catholicism and vice versa, referring to the “tyranny of Rome” interchangeably with the “captivity by the Turk.”

In *Mystical Babylon or Papall Rome* (1624), Theophilus Higgons identifies Roman Catholicism as “Babylonian captivity”: “This consonancie is in the Scriptures; this resemblance in sinne, and ruine, betwxt the old Babylon, and the new. For Babylon is the first Rome, and Rome is the second Babylon.”¹⁸ In *A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Martin Luther regrets that he had previously “clung to the Roman *tyranny* with great superstition.”¹⁹ Going a step further than Higgons, Luther equates Roman Catholicism with Babylonian captivity and the kingdom of Antichrist: “they are guilty of all the souls that perish under this miserable *captivity*, and the papacy is truely the kingdom of Babylon, yes, the kingdom of the real Antichrist!”²⁰

These anti-papist tropes of captivity are not just incidental but far-ranging and pervasive in early modern Reformation polemics. When Luther touches on the doctrinal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism on the issue of Holy Communion, he describes Catholic sacraments in tropes of captivity: “the first *captivity* of this sacrament, therefore, concerns its substance or completeness, of which we have been deprived by the *despotism* of Rome.”²¹ Speaking of the Catholic emphasis on works rather than on faith, Luther appropriates the geopolitical figures of exile and captivity: “By them we have been carried away out of our own land, as in a *Babylonian captivity*, and despoiled of all our precious possessions.”²² In expounding the religious sacrament of baptism, Luther denounces the Catholic ritual in political terms: “This glorious *liberty* of ours, and this understanding of baptism have been carried *captive* in our day. And whom have we to thank for this but the Roman pontiff with his *despotism*? . . . he seeks only to oppress us with his decrees and his laws, and to *enslave* and *ensnare* us in the *tyranny* of his power.”²³

Interestingly, Protestants also depict their antagonism toward Catholicism as the crusade against “the second Turk.” In early modern Europe, the Ottoman sultan was often seen as a figure of “tyranny, pride, and pomp leading an empire in a violent effort to conquer Christendom and extinguish the true faith.”²⁴ Considering the historical reality that both the Ottoman Empire and Roman Catholicism represented a frightening image of alterity and a serious political threat to the English, it is not surprising that Protestant polemical language conflates the one with the other.²⁵ Luther also brings the Islamic other into play to talk of the spiritual captivity of Catholicism: “they not only take *captive* but utterly destroy the true *liberty* of the Church, and deal with us far worse than the Turk, in opposition to the word of the Apostle, ‘Do not be *enslaved* by men.’ Yes, to be subjected to their statutes and *tyrannical* laws is to be *enslaved* by men.”²⁶ He summons the reformers to “abhor . . . the *tyranny* of Rome” as if they were “held *captive* by the Turk.”²⁷ In *Table Talk*, Luther explicitly links the religious threats of Catholicism to the military and political threats of the Ottoman Empire: “Antichrist is at the same time the Pope and the Turk. A living creature consists of body and soul. The spirit of Antichrist is the Pope, his flesh the Turk. One attacks the church physically, the other spiritually.”²⁸

On the other hand, counter-Reformation polemicists also called for a “general crusade” for “the repelling and ruin . . . of the infidels and the extirpation of the Lutheran sect.”²⁹ After the break with Rome, English Protestants were labeled as “infidels” and “heretics” by Catholic polemicists, and following the Anglo-Ottoman Capitulations of 1580, the English were considered as “the new turkes.”³⁰ Meanwhile, as both Protestants and Catholics called each other names—heretics and Turks—they were both anxious about the military expansion of the Ottoman Empire and continued to call for a unified

Christian crusade against the real Turks.³¹ The fluidity and pliability of these polemical tropes provide Massinger with rich linguistic resources to dramatize the anxieties of Anglo-Catholic and Anglo-Islamic relations in *The Renegado*.

As we have seen, the erotic exchanges between Vitelli and Donusa invert the conventional early modern gender and religious ideology. To make it even more complex, even when Vitelli idolizes Donusa as a divine figure, he associates her linguistically with a regime of oppressive tyranny that connotes both Turkish tyranny and Catholic captivity.

The second encounter between Vitelli and Donusa establishes her identity as a goddess. Upon the mere sight of Donusa, Vitelli “stands amazed” and wonders whether he is having a supernatural vision: “Is not this *Tempe*? . . . Or do I dream, / And this is a *heavenly vision*? (II.4.5-7). Amazed at the glory of the Ottoman court, Vitelli idolizes Donusa as a goddess residing in heaven and sees himself as a sinner unworthy of beholding the face of the divine, “It is a sight too glorious to behold / For such a *wretch* as I am” (II.4.8-9). Considering himself as a miserable wretch in need of divine favor, Vitelli kneels before Donusa and idolizes her.³² She raises him to his feet and speaks of herself as one that has miraculous power to give life to the dead: “My soft touch brings no ague, / . . . rather they have power . . . / To give to dead men motion” (II.4.15-24).

As a foreigner under the jurisdiction of Islamic law, Vitelli positions himself as a “wretch” who is granted divine favor and considers Donusa’s name as “a *potent charm*, although pronounced / By [his] *profane* but much unworthier tongue, / Hath brought [him] safe to this forbidden place / Where Christian yet ne’er trode” (II.4.29-33).³³ However,

Vitelli also sees himself as a martyr who would willingly undergo any kind of torture that may be imposed on him:

To have seen you only
 And to have touched that fortune-making hand
 Will with delight weigh down all tortures that
 A flinty hangman's rage could execute
 Or rigid *tyranny* command with pleasure. (II.4.42-46)

The language that Vitelli uses to idolize Donusa is imbued with religious fervor, similar to that of Christ's followers.³⁴ On the one hand, Vitelli idolizes Donusa and links her name to a Catholic charm; on the other hand, he associates her with a regime of tyrannical oppression. The "tortures" that Vitelli imagines "A flinty hangman's rage could execute / Or rigid *tyranny* command with pleasure" might ring an echo with both Turkish tyranny and the Catholic persecutions inflicted on Protestants under the reign of Bloody Mary.³⁵ Thus, even while Vitelli construes Donusa as a goddess, she is associated with both Turkish tyranny and Catholic oppression in his loaded rhetoric.

Having idolized Donusa as a goddess in their previous encounter, Vitelli quickly turns against Donusa by construing her as a harlot. Just four scenes ago, after relishing in Donusa's beauty and wealth, Vitelli boasts to Francisco and Gazet of his good fortune as one that is "strangely metamorphosed" (II.6.20):

There's nothing

That can fall in the compass of your wishes

(Though it were to redeem a thousand slaves

From the Turkish galleys, or at home to erect

Some pious work to shame all hospitals),

But I am master of the means. (II.6.30-34)

Although using the same language of transformation, while Donusa feels colonized and paralyzed by her sexual desires, Vitelli feels empowered by Donusa's love, ascending from the status of a "a poor mechanic peddler" to the "master of the means." Reveling in his new found material omnipotence, Vitelli boasts of his power "to redeem a thousand slaves / From the Turkish galleys", which is highly ironic, considering that he gains the power to "redeem a thousand slaves" only by succumbing to the allure of Islam.

Once having satiated his lust, however, Vitelli accuses Donusa of losing her sexual purity and undermines her previous identity as a goddess. Confounded by Vitelli's sudden change of attitude, Donusa asks Vitelli, "Am I grown / Old or deformed since yesterday?" (III.5.2-3). He retorts, "You are still, / Although the sating of *your* lust hath sullied / The immaculate whiteness of your virgin beauties" (III.5.3). Vitelli admits that she is still the same person that he had worshipped just a while ago, but "her" lust has forfeited her virginal purity. Vitelli cunningly uses syntactical constructions that protect him from having any share of responsibility in the act: "pureness / The sword with which you ever fought and conquered, / *Is ravished from you by unchaste desires*" (III.5.6-8). By using a passive structure, Vitelli washes his hands from the alleged dirty act. He

employs the conventional misogynistic rhetoric to denigrate exotic women as ensnaring sirens: “I will stop / Mine ears against these *charms* . . . of this *second siren*” (III.5.20-22). The miraculous “potent charm” that saved Vitelli’s life has now transformed into “charms” that lure him into “destruction” (II.4.29; III.5.30). Previously an object of devotion, Donusa now becomes an object of “conquest” (III.5.35): “Up, my virtue! / And holy thoughts and resolutions arm me / Against this fierce temptation!” (III.5.37-39).

Not only does Vitelli reproach Donusa for sexual incontinence, but he reconfigures her as a literal and spiritual whore by conflating the sexual with the mercantile and the religious: “At what an *overvalue* I have *purchased* / The *wanton treasure* of your virgin *bounties* / That in their false fruition heap upon me / *Despair* and *horror*” (III.5.44). He willfully wishes that he can undo what is done as if he was canceling a business transaction:

That I could with that ease

Redeem my forfeit innocence or cast up

The *poison* I received into my entrails

From *the alluring cup of your enticements*

As now I do deliver back the *price*

And *salary* of your lust! (III.5.49)

In the process of accusing Donusa of being a whore, however, Vitelli has to confront his own loss of “innocence” which he had refused to recognize earlier. Verbally denigrating Donusa as a whore, Vitelli unwittingly implicates himself as a prostitute by returning the

casket of jewels he received as the “price and salary” of his sexual favor. As both literal and spiritual whoredom is implied in his speech, the sexual relations between Donusa and Vitelli are heavily loaded with religious tropes. The language that Vitelli uses to accuse Donusa is surprisingly similar to the description of the scarlet whore in *The Fairie Quenne*, whose sources can be traced back to the Babylonian Whore in Revelations:

Then tooke the angrie witch her *golden cup*,
Which still she bore, replete with magick artes;
Death and *despeyre* did many thereof sup,
And secret *poyson* through their inner parts,
Th’eternall bale of heaue wounded harts; (1.8.14)³⁶

By conflating the sexual with the religious, Vitelli accuses Donusa of physical as well as spiritual whoredom, thereby aligning himself to Donusa through the figure of the Babylonian Whore.

Ania Loomba has observed that in Renaissance drama, turnings toward Islam or conversions are “expressed through a sexualized vocabulary” because “‘to turn Turk’ carried erotic connotations which drew upon ideas of Muslim hyper-sexuality.”³⁷ Daniel Vitkus also contends that in *The Renegado*, as in Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk*, “religious conversion is offered as an erotic temptation.”³⁸ I beg to differ and argue that the opposite is true. In *The Renegado*, the sexual intrigues between Vitelli and Donusa are expressed through a religious vocabulary loaded with anti-Catholic tropes of captivity. Instead of religious conversions being eroticized, erotic encounters in *The Renegado* are theologized. In a gendered reading of conversions in early modern drama,

Loomba argues that when a Christian man is tempted into conversion to Islam, it is described in terms of “whoredom” and often leads to tragedy; on the contrary, if it is an Islamic woman who converts and marries a Christian man, the vocabulary of “romance and marriage” is used.³⁹ In *The Renegado*, however, the language of religion, romance, and whoredom is intertwined. This linguistic and ideological conflation of the sexual with the religious is symptomatic of the connection between adultery and idolatry in Reformation polemics.

In *An Exposition on the Book of Revelation wherein the Visions and Prophecies of Christ are Opened and Expounded* (1688), Hanserd Knowles, preacher of the Morning Lecture at Pinners-Hall, follows the Protestant hermeneutic tradition of annotating Revelations as a contemporary allegory of the corrupt papacy, identifying the Roman Catholic Church with the Whore of Babylon:

17.4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication.⁴⁰

17.5 And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.⁴¹

In addition to captivity tropes, Massinger conflates the religious identities of Vitelli and Donusa by reworking the biblical and literary figure of the scarlet whore. Ironically, Vitelli is the one who identifies Donusa as the Whore of Babylon as well as the one who performs the act of divestiture.

While clothing often served as a signifier of gender, racial, and religious identity in the early modern period, Vitelli's symbolic disengagement with Islamic culture—enacted by throwing off his cloak and doublet—is heavily loaded with the language of Protestant polemics:

Or thus *unclothe* me
 Of sin's *gay trippings*, the proud livery
 Of wicked pleasure, which . . .
 Like to Alcides' fatal shirt, tears off
 Our flesh and reputation together,
 Leaving our *ulcerous follies* bare and open
 To all malicious censure! (III.5.49-56)

Early modern Protestant polemics often attacked Catholics for the cloaking of sins under pompous ceremonies and elaborate rituals, which led the spiritual illness within to fester and rankle. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare dramatizes this idea in the closet scene where Hamlet admonishes Queen Gertrude to confront her own sinfulness. Hamlet enjoins his mother against covering up her spiritual corruption:

Lay not a flattering unction to your soul
 That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
 It will but *skin* and *film* the *ulcerous* place

Whilst *rank corruption, mining all within,*

Infects unseen. (III.4.140)⁴²

The passage is built upon the literary tradition of disrobing the scarlet whore, Duessa, in *The Faerie Queene*: “that witch they *disaraid*, / And *robd of royall robes*, and *purple pall*, / And ornaments that richly were displaid”, exposing a “loathly, wrinckled hag, ill fauoured, old, / Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told” (1.8.46).⁴³

The linguistic identification of Vitelli with the scarlet whore in *The Faerie Queene* and the Whore of Babylon in Protestant polemics highlights the textual conflation of Anglo-Islamic religious identities.

In response to Vitelli’s reproach, Donusa expresses her point of view in a calm and rational manner, contrary to the stereotypical image of the hyper-emotional Oriental woman. With regard to her loss of virginity, Donusa points to Vitelli’s blind spot and forces him to acknowledge the mutuality of their sexual relation in a dignified manner: “You must grant, / If you hold that a loss to you, mine equals / If not transcends it” (III.5.56-58). Donusa redeems herself by highlighting her virginity prior to the encounter of Vitelli: “If you then first tasted / That poison (*as you call it*), I brought with me / A palate unacquainted with the relish / Of those delights” (III.5.58-61). Even in this scene where Vitelli launches an idiosyncratic denigration of Islamic culture, Donusa’s voice and perspective is never absent.

Although Vitelli tries to cut himself off from Donusa and the Islamic culture she represents, he is inevitably implicated and involved in whatever Donusa has “committed.” In the process of rejecting Donusa as the figure of the Babylonian Whore,

Vitelli, the Catholic Venetian, is symbolically the one that enacts the act of divesture and exposes his own “ulcerous follies.” As much as Vitelli wishes to deny it, Donusa, the Ottoman princess, and Vitelli, the Catholic aristocrat, are more like mirror figures of each other than binary opposites; the visual spectacle of their reciprocal kneeling would further confirm their similarity in the audience’s mind (II.4.14, III.5.71).

The parallel courtship plot between Asambeg and Paulina also shows how gender identities are reconfigured through metaphors of captivity. Prior to the stage encounter between Asambeg and Paulina, Asambeg has just banished Grimaldi for having “blasphemed the Ottoman power” (78). Even though Mustapha tries to intercede for Grimaldi, Asambeg insists on his inviolable power of jurisdiction: “give me leave / To use my own will and command in Tunis” (II.5.97-8). However, when he is ready to go see Paulina, he transforms himself into another persona: “Rage, now leave me. / Stern looks, and all the ceremonious forms/ Attending on dread majesty, fly from / *Transformed* Asambeg” (II.5.101-04). Although Paulina is the one who is literally “enthralled”, she “*commands* her keeper [Asambeg]” and “*robs* [him] of the fierceness [he] was born with” (II.5.106-7). The key leading to Paulina’s cell is also the key that commands Asambeg’s freedom of mind: Asambeg asks himself, “Why should I hug / So near my heart what leads me to *my prison*” (II.5.104-5).

Curiously, both the leading males in this play, Vitelli and Asambeg, describe themselves as being “ravished” (II.4.12; II.5.131) by the females they admire, thereby placing themselves in a sexually powerless and feminized position: “Stout men quake at my frowns, and in return / I tremble at her softness” (II.5.108-9). However, regardless of gender, both the Islamic suitors, Donusa and Asambeg, imagine themselves as the object

of an amorous “conquest”, inverting the early modern historical reality that Ottoman was an empire that wielded more “colonial” power than England: “How would this tongue, turned to a loving note, / *Invade and take possession of my soul, / Which then I durst not call my own*” (II.5.133-35). While Donusa is surprised at how she is magically “transformed” (II.1.23) from a princess who possesses “virgin pride” (II.1.24) to an object of “conquest” (II.1.27), Asambeg is also overwhelmed by the enchanting and transformative power of Paulina, “There is something in [her] / That can work miracles . . . / Dispose and alter sexes” (II.5.149-51). Gender identities are again reconfigured through a religious vocabulary. Asambeg’s “devotion” (II.5.163) to his “sweet saint” (II.5.164) makes him fall captive to the supernatural power that Paulina seems to possess, even to the point of subverting his own gender, “To my wrong, / In spite of nature, I will be your *nurse*, / Your *woman*, your physician, and your fool” (II.5.152-3). The Muslim Asambeg is therefore aligned to the Catholic Vitelli through the effeminate role of the “nurse.” Furthermore, Paulina’s name is associated with St. Paul, the apostle of Christ, but also with five Roman Popes, three of which held papacy between 1534 and 1621.⁴⁴ Both the references of mutual enthrallment between Paulina and Asambeg and the associations of effeminacy in Asambeg and Vitelli point to the textual interweaving of the Catholic and the Turk in *The Renegado*.

Having violated the Islamic legal system, Donusa attempts to convert Vitelli to Islam to save both of their lives. The language of conversion that Donusa uses is heavily couched in Protestant tropes of captivity:

My suit is

That you would quit your shoulders of a *burthen*

Under whose *ponderous weight* you willfully

Have too long groaned; to cast those *fetters* off,

With which, with your own hands, you *chain* your *freedom*.

Forsake a severe, nay, imperious mistress

Whose service does exact perpetual cares,

Watchings, and troubles; (IV.3.74-81)

Donusa uses a strong Protestant polemical language to convert a Catholic man to Islam. A Protestant priest could have used the exact same rhetoric to convert Catholics to Protestantism. As Protestants configure belief in Roman Catholicism as slavery to onerous rituals, Donusa explicitly compares Vitelli's Catholicism to a "mistress . . . served [with] slave-like patience" (IV.3.87-88). The polemical metaphors of captivity in this passage are especially poignant since they are literally applied to the Catholic religion instead of hinting at it.

Even when Donusa's attempts of conversion are refuted, she still uses metaphors of captivity to speak of herself: "I came here to *take* you, / But I perceive a yielding in myself / To be your *prisoner*" (IV.3.147-49). More significantly, when Donusa ends up being converted to Christianity, she dramatically changes her identity based on her change of religion: "I am another woman—till this minute / I never lived, nor durst think how to die" (V.3.121-22). Having come to a full circle, now she is the one who sees Vitelli as a divine agent who performs miraculous acts. Although physically imprisoned

and socially powerless, Vitelli is reconfigured as the one who has liberated Donusa from the yoke of Islamic faith: “Let me kiss the hand / That did this miracle and . . . *freed me from the cruelest of prisons*, / Blind ignorance and misbelieve” (V.3.128-32). The final reference to spiritual captivity in this passage creates two layers of meanings: on the surface level, it refers to her liberation from the Turkish tyranny of Islamic faith, which would be a cause for celebration for the English audience. On a deeper level, the fact that Donusa converts to Catholicism, which is associated throughout the play with Babylonian and Turkish captivity, creates an uneasy resolution rather than a neat closure.

According to the office-book of the Master of the Revels, *The Renegado* was first performed on April 17, 1624, at the beginning of a massive resurgence of anti-Catholic polemic literature which had been conspicuously absent in 1621-1623.⁴⁵ In the early 1620s, James embarked on a series of negotiations with Spain for a potential marital alliance between his son Charles and the Infanta of Spain, creating a great deal of controversy and resistance among his vehement Protestant subjects.⁴⁶ In “Directions concerning Preaching” (1622), James issued a legal ban on preaching “bitter invectives and indecent railing speeches” against the Catholic Church and suspended the penal codes against Catholics.⁴⁷ These drastic concessions led to embarrassing rumors about James’ secret or imminent conversion to Catholicism. As Anglo-Spanish negotiations stalled in the fall of 1623, a massive amount of anti-Catholic literature started to flood the bookstalls of London.⁴⁸ On April 6, 1624, James announced the collapse of the proposed match and on April 23, 1624 signed the “Petition of Religion” in which concessions to Catholics were banned from any future marital treaties. In between these events, *The Renegado* was licensed for the stage by Henry Herbert. The appalling prospects of a

Catholic queen were barely banished when a new match proposal to Henrietta Maria of France appeared on the horizon in April 1624.

Benedict S. Robinson suggests that the outline of *The Renegado*—the arrival of Vitelli and Gazet in Tunis in disguise and the subsequent sexual intrigues—“recalls Charles and Buckingham’s disguised escapes to and from Spain” in the fall of 1623 and the anxiety of Vitelli being seduced into marrying a royal woman of another religion “surely evokes the danger of a Catholic match.”⁴⁹ The choice of casting English surrogates as Catholics in *The Renegado* resonates with the political controversies of the early 1620s at the height of two controversial Anglo-Catholic marital alliances. The potential dissolution and reversal of religious identities was an especially poignant issue that preoccupied different court factions as well the general populace.⁵⁰ The complex Anglo-Islamic dynamics in *The Renegado* is triangulated by its highly contentious anti-Catholic rhetoric. The sexual politics between Donusa and Vitelli, and Asambeg and Paulina, are constantly expressed in religious tropes of captivity that would bring up Turkish as well as Catholic associations for the audience. In *The Renegado*, Phillip Massinger offers a dramatic rehearsal of the triangulated tensions of Anglo-Catholic-Islamic identity politics, playing out anxieties about the reversible nature of gender and religious identities in the early modern period.

Notes

¹ This chapter has been previously published in *Cahiers Elisabethains* 75 (Spring 2009).

² In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, not only were English men and women on the coastline hauled out of their homes and churches, taken captive by pirates, but a number of them ended up spiritually enthralled to Islam. See Peter F. Mullany, “Massinger’s *The Renegado*: Religion in Stuart Tragicomedy”, *Genre* 5 (1972), 138-52, 143 and Nabil Matar, “The Traveller as Captive: Renaissance England and the Allure of Islam”, *LIT* 7 (1996), 187-96, 189.

³ Daniel J. Vitkus, ed. Introduction. *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000), 8.

⁴ Vitkus, 8. Despite F. S. Boas’s comment that “Of the many surprising features in the play, the most astonishing is that within twenty years after the gunpowder plot . . . a member of the Order should be represented as the good genius of the play”, critics who touch upon the topic of religion did not address the elements of Catholicism in a satisfactory manner (F. S. Boas, *An Introduction to Stuart Drama*, [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1946], 308).

⁵ In the Introduction to *Three Turk Plays From Early Modern England*, Daniel J. Vitkus proposes that, as a rewrite of Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk*, *The Renegado* might have been subtitled “A Turk Turned Christian” (Vitkus, 43). Vitkus sees *The Renegado* as a direct response to *A Christian Turned Turk* in which the outcome of Daborne’s tragedy is reversed and the redeeming power of Christianity is affirmed. A teleological binary of Christians triumphing over Turks is implicit in this kind of reading,

reducing the complexities of identity politics in the play. For similar readings, see Bindu Malieckal, “‘Wanton Irreligious Madness’: Conversion and Castration in Massinger’s *The Renegado*”, *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 31 (2002 October), 25-43, 41; Doris Adler, *Phillip Massinger*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 57; Peter F. Mullany, 139; and Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick economies: drama, mercantilism, and disease in Shakespeare’s England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 157, 159-60. In “Strange Commodities”, Benedict S. Robinson reads *The Renegado* in the context of a Laudian agenda, arguing that “the play’s answer to the problem of Christianity is an inclusive one” (*Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007], 141).

⁶Claire Jowitt, “Massinger’s *The Renegado* (1624) and the Spanish Marriage”, *Cahiers Elisabethains: Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 65 (2004 Spring), 45-53, 46. As Claire Jowitt observes, the use of foreign characters and settings as displacement for English ones was common in early modern drama (52). Several topical references to England in *The Renegado* also support this point: the sexual freedom that English ladies supposedly enjoy is compared to the abstinent life of Turk ladies (I.2.1-50); the sexual appetite of “Turkish dames” is compared to the fierceness of “English mastiffs” (I.3.9-10); Gazet makes a reference to the supposed civility of master-servant relationship in London (I.3.88-90); and the allusion to the use of same-sex relations to gain political favors in Jacobean England: “Tis but procuring; / A smock employment, which has made more Knights . . . than twenty years / Of service in the field” (II.2.70-73). For a similar reading, see Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England*, 159.

⁷Vitkus, "Trafficking with the Turk: English Travelers in the Ottoman Empire during the Seventeenth Century" in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna Singh (New York: Palgrave Press, 2000), 39.

⁸Gerald Maclean, "Ottomanism before Orientalism? Bishop King Praises Henry Blount, Passenger in the Levant" in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna Singh (New York: Palgrave Press, 2000), 86.

⁹Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh, ed. Introduction, *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Press, 2000), 3.

¹⁰Harris, 160.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Hereafter, emphasis added is mine unless otherwise noted.

¹³For a discussion of women as "gifts of exchange" between males, see Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex", *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Nicholson, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 27-62.

¹⁴William M. Hamlin, "Attributions of Divinity in Renaissance Ethnography and Romance; Or, Making Religion of Wonder", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24, 3 (1994), 415-47.

¹⁵Ania Loomba, "'Delicious Traffick': Racial and Religious Difference on Early Modern Stages", *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 214.

¹⁶See John 11:11-43, where Jesus made Lazarus rise from the tomb four days after his burial: “Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again” (11:23); “And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go” (11:43-44). All biblical quotations are from the King James Bible.

¹⁷Vitkus, “The English and the Early Modern Mediterranean: Theater, Commerce, and Identity”, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 36.

¹⁸Theophilus Higgons, *Mystical Babylon or Papall Rome*, (London, 1624), B2 recto.

¹⁹Martin Luther, *A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, trans. Albert T. W. Steinhäuser. ed. Robert E. Smith. Project Wittenberg Online Electronic Study Edition. 5 May 2005, <<http://www.ctsfw.edu/etext/luther/babylonian/babylonian.htm>>, 497.

²⁰Luther, 537.

²¹Luther, 506.

²²Luther, 520.

²³Luther, 535.

²⁴Vitkus, ed. Introduction, *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, (New York: Columbia UP, 2000), 11.

²⁵While Anglo-Hispanic tensions culminated in the Spanish Armada of 1588, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire represented an even more powerful military and political threat. The Ottoman Turks took down Constantinople in 1453; then a series of

invasions followed, including Athens in 1459, Otranto in 1480, Rhodes in 1552, Budapest in 1526, the siege of Vienna in 1529, Cyprus in 1571, and Crete in 1669 (Vitkus *Three*, 7).

²⁶Luther, 536.

²⁷Luther, 507.

²⁸Luther, *Selections from the Table Talk of Martin Luther*. trans. Captain Henry Bell. The Project Gutenberg. 5 May 2005 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/9841>>.

²⁹Jonathan Riley-Smith, "An Approach to Crusading Ethics", *Reading Medieval Studies* 6, (1980): 3-19.

³⁰Richard Verstegan, *A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles, Presupposed to be Intended against the Realme of England* (Cologne, 1592), 48. In a letter to Murad III, Elizabeth I fashioned herself as "the mighty defender of the Christian faith against all kinds of idolatries", emphasizing their common cause against Catholicism. (The correspondence is reproduced in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, [London, 1589], 165.)

³¹Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe", *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. and introd. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's, 1999), 213.

³²The etymology of "wretch" suggests an "outcast" or an "exile" and is often used in devotional literature to speak of one's sinfulness that creates alienation from God (*OED Online*. Oxford University Press. Rice University. 6 May 2005 <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50287828?query_type=word&queryword=

wretch&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=K14g-4mTmNS-16800&hilite=50287828>.

³³“Charm” is “the chanting or recitation of a verse supposed to possess magic power or occult influence; hence, any action, process, verse, sentence, word, or material thing, credited with such properties; a magic spell” (*OED Online*. Oxford University Press. Rice University. 6 May 2005 <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50036983?query_type=word&queryword=charm&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=Doec-Uk1bRW-16797&result_place=1>. Compare this passage to Asambeg’s infatuation with Paulina: “Stout men quake at my frowns, and in return /I tremble at her softness. Base Grimaldi/ But only *named Paulina*, and the *charm*/ Had almost choked my fury ere could pronounce his sentence” (II.5.108-12); “There is something in you [Paulina] that can *work miracles*” (II.5.150). Both Donusa’s and Paulina’s names are referred to as “charms”, which like the Catholic “relic” that Francisco gave Paulina “ha[ve] power/ To keep the owner free from violence” (I.1.147, 49).

³⁴See Mt 9:21, “For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole” and Mt 14:36, “And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole” (KJB).

³⁵The “tortures that / A flinty hangman’s rage could execute” might recall the execution of Jane Grey and Guildford Dudley under the reign of Mary Tudor. See *Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary*, ed. John Gough Nichols, (London, 1850).

³⁶Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, (London: Longman, 2001), 105.

³⁷Loomba, 213.

³⁸Vitkus, "Scenes of Conversion: Piracy, Apostasy, and the Sultan's Seraglio", *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 158.

³⁹Loomba, 214.

⁴⁰To provide a clear sense of how Knowles incorporates Protestant polemics into Scriptural exegesis, I will quote at length his annotations for these two verses: "By these purple, and scarlet garments, decked with gold, pearls, and precious stones, wherewith this woman, the great whore was arrayed, we may understand the riches, pomp, and pride of the Roman papal church, (Judges 8:26 and Ezek. 27:7–10). And also, the [*golden cup in her hand*] signifies the whores allurements, and enticements of all sorts of persons, kings, people, and nations, unto her superstitious and idolatrous false worship, worshipping images, crucifixes, etc. For this golden cup is full of the abominations and filthinesses of the whores fornication and spiritual whoredoms; wherewith she makes them drunk, as with wine" (emphasis in the original, Hanserd Knowles, *An Exposition on the Book of Revelation wherein the Visions and Prophecies of Christ are Opened and Expounded* [London, 1688]). The fact that Knowles' *An Exposition on the Book of Revelation* was published more than a hundred and fifty years after the establishment of the Anglican Church shows how ingrained and long-lasting was the anti-Catholic exegetical tradition of Protestant polemicists in regard to the Book of Revelations.

⁴¹ “[*Babylon the great,*] that is, the great whore, the Roman Papal Church, and [*the mother of harlots.*] all national churches, parish churches, cathedral churches, provincial churches, etc., who own, acknowledge, and subject themselves to the ecclesiastical headship of the Roman hierarchy, pope, and papal prelacy, episcopacy, or presbytery. [*And abominations of the earth,*] that is, all the abominations in the world are nourished and cherished, by the indulgences, pardons, and dispensations of the Pope and Church of Rome” (emphasis in the original, Knowles, *An Exposition*).

⁴² William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*. ed. Stephen Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: Norton, 1997).

⁴³ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, (London: Longman, 2001), 111.

⁴⁴ Paul: name of six Popes, five of which held papacy before the end of the early modern period. Three of them held papacy in the early modern period: Paul III (né Alessandro Farnese) 1468-1549 (Pope 1534-49) who began Counter-Reformation; Paul IV (né Giovanni Pietro Carafa) 1476-1559 (Pope 1555-59) who issued an anti-Semitic canon law that established the Roman Ghetto; Paul V (né Camillo Borghese) 1552-1621 (Pope 1605-21) who forbade English Catholics to swear allegiance to the king and encouraged missions to Latin America. (*The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, J. N. D. Kelly, [Oxford University Press, 1991], *Oxford Reference Online*, Rice University, 6 May 2005 <[http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/](http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t99.e258)

ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t99.e258>.

⁴⁵William Gifford, *The Plays of Phillip Massinger in Four Volumes with Notes Critical and Explanatory* (London: G. and W. Nicol; F. and C. Rivington; J. Barker; Cadell and Davies; R. H. Evans; J. Mawman; and Longman and Co., 1805), volume II, 122. Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English politics and the coming of war, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 281-3.

⁴⁶Some of the most troubling criticism of James' concessions came from the pulpits. See for example, Thomas Taylor, *A Mappe of Rome* (London, 1620) and Thomas Jackson, *Judah Must into Captivitvie* (London, 1622). As Jerzy Limon argues, the pulpit as well as the theater, with their appeal to the illiterate mass, played an essential role in shaping public opinion in early modern England (*Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/1624* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986], 2).

⁴⁷Cogswell, 34.

⁴⁸Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986),

⁴⁹Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 129.

⁵⁰As Limon has observed, dozens of plays as well as "a positive flood of pamphlets, ballads, sermons, broadsheets and newsletters" treated or alluded to the controversial political issues surrounding the return of Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham from Spain in October 1623, 2.

CONCLUSION

Recent historiography and cultural criticism have reassessed and revised our view of gender relations in the early modern period. Both literary critics and cultural historians have demonstrated that Elizabethan women exercised power and authority in many areas of social life, including control over medicine, supervision of food production, and power over moveable property and assets within the home.¹ Garthine Walker argues that women were by no means “characterized by passivity and weakness” and Pamela Brown shows that women exercised power through “the verbal and intellectual dexterity of jesting.”² Frances Dolan has shown that women were perpetrators as well as victims of domestic violence.³ Contrasting written laws with actual practice, Amy Erickson has demonstrated how women owned, managed and inherited property on a scale previously unrecognized, revising the traditional picture of women’s economic status. As Bernard Capp has observed, “a significant gulf existed between patriarchal ideal and social practice.”⁴ Keith Wrightson also argues that “the private existence of a strong complementary and companionate ethos” stood side by side with “the doctrine of male authority and public female subordination.”⁵ Anthony Fletcher goes as far as claiming that the early modern period saw “a crisis in men’s control over women” and calls for the “the huge untold story of the contestedness of English patriarchy within the early modern home.”⁶ English subjects under Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I “lived in an era of ideological discomfort,” and many of them were “uprooted and swept this way and that by the confused forces of their age, plucked at on every side by contending interests cloaked in puzzling dialectic and cloudy image.”⁷

On the other hand, early modern dramatic representations of the “Turk” figure also reveal attempts at accommodation and understanding that stand in contrast to the prevailing hostility that existed in the medieval period. Unprecedented scales of diplomatic, cultural, and commercial contacts⁸ between the English and the Ottomans complicated the English perceptions of Islam and produced more nuanced dramatic representations of the stage “Turk.”⁹ The cross-cultural mingling that took place in the Mediterranean “call[ed] into question clear religious, national, and racial differences” and encouraged “a strategic flexibility of identity.”¹⁰ In London playhouses, “the spectacle of Mediterranean alterity produces a space of deferral and possibility,” and a “site for transference, exchange, and mixture.”¹¹ Levantine culture, for example, is represented in drama by a series of alien characters “who inhabit a dynamic, catalytic space in which cultures overlap, meet, clash, or engage in exchange.”¹²

Gerald Maclean argues that the English “personal and national identities were busily remaking themselves [. . .] through a wide variety of different kinds of exchange and encounter.”¹³ Moreover, these English identities were no longer “constructed only from within the local, the familiar, and the traditional, but increasingly became inseparably connected to the global, the strange, and the alien.”¹⁴ Early modern English identity was in a process of “definition and redefinition, of imagining communities, of perceiving boundaries as well as challenging these boundaries.”¹⁵ Analyzing early modern travel narratives, Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh observe that the recounting of early modern Anglo-Islamic encounters do not produce Said’s Orientalism, but instead report “cultural encounters in which self and other are not fixed in opposing positions but are rewritten through [specific] discursive and social interventions” (3). This project started out as an

investigation into how interracial romance/marriage between Christians and Turks is enacted and reconfigured on the stage and how such performances challenge early modern official gender, racial, and religious ideologies. By analyzing the power dynamics between interracial couples in these plays, I have discovered that the representation of self and other do not conform to the contemporary gender, racial, and religious stereotypes. Instead, the discursive and social processes of courtship and marriage involved in interracial romance mediate, reconfigure, and ultimately invert these very stereotypes.

Notes

¹ See Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

² See Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Pamela Brown, *Better a Shrew Than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002). Also see *Gender and Power in Shrew-Taming Narratives, 1500-1700* eds. David Wootton and Graham Holderness (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

³ Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

⁴ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵ Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London: Routledge, 1993) 92.

⁶ Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) xvi, 191.

⁷ William Haller, *The Rite of Puritanism* (New York: Harper, 1957) 260.

⁸ According to Nabil Matar, "From the Elizabethan period until the end of the seventeenth century, thousands of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish men and women interacted directly with the North Africans of the Barbary States as sailors, traders, soldiers, craftsmen, and artisans who either went to North Africa in search of work and

opportunity or were seized by privateers and subsequently settled there” (“Introduction” 1) and before the Great Migration to North America at the end of the 1620s, “there were more Britons in North Africa than in North America, as men were drawn to the Barbary States in search of work, livelihood, and settlement” (2). With the establishment of the Levant Company in 1581, and the growing commercial connections to the Mediterranean world, the English felt the power of Islam directly as it affected their maritime economy (Vitkus “Introduction” 3).

⁹ Vitkus, “Commerce” 183.

¹⁰ Vitkus, 120.

¹¹ Vitkus, 22, 30.

¹² Vitkus, 30.

¹³ “Ottomanism” 86.

¹⁴ Vitkus, “Trafficking” 39.

¹⁵ Dursteler, 105.

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